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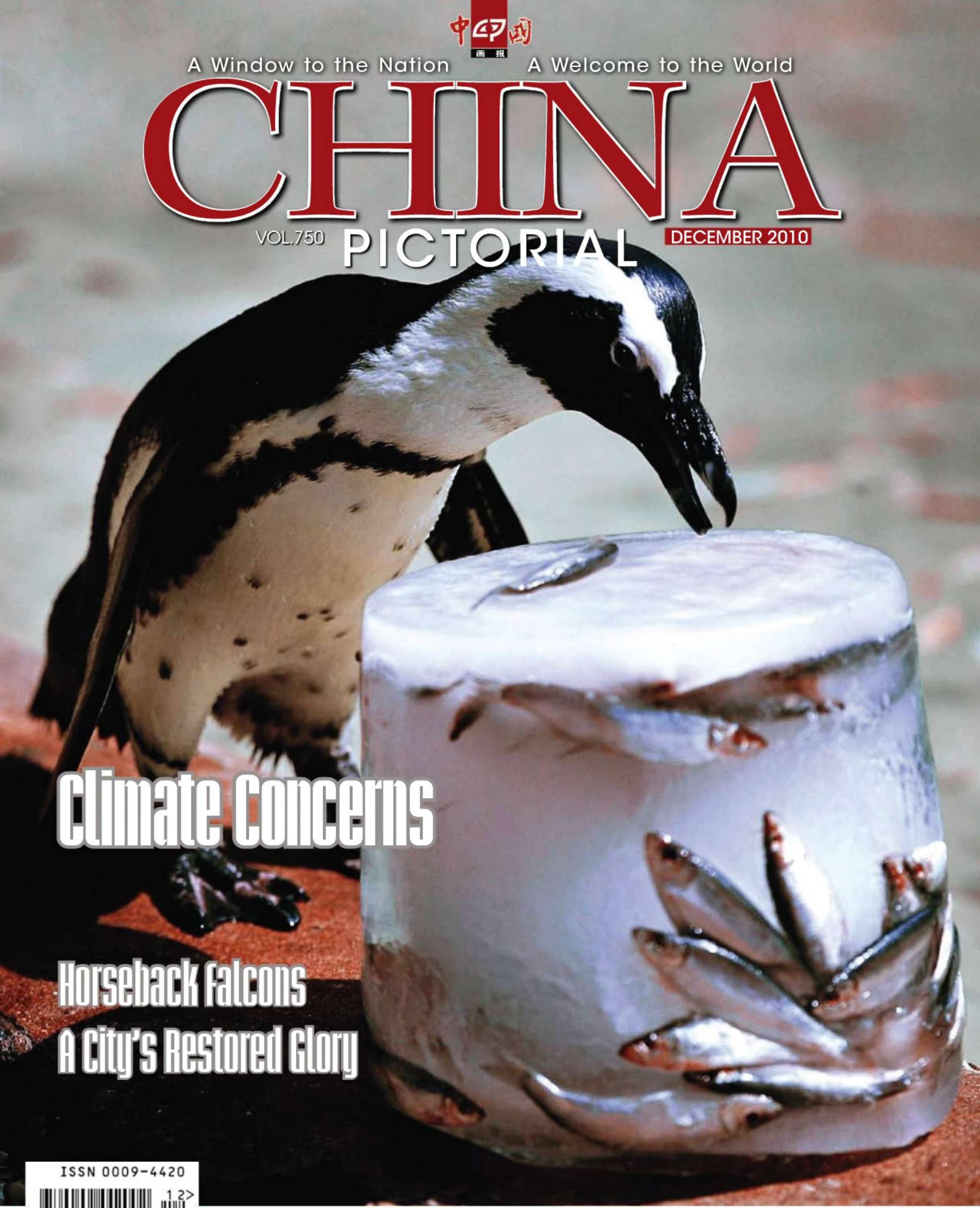

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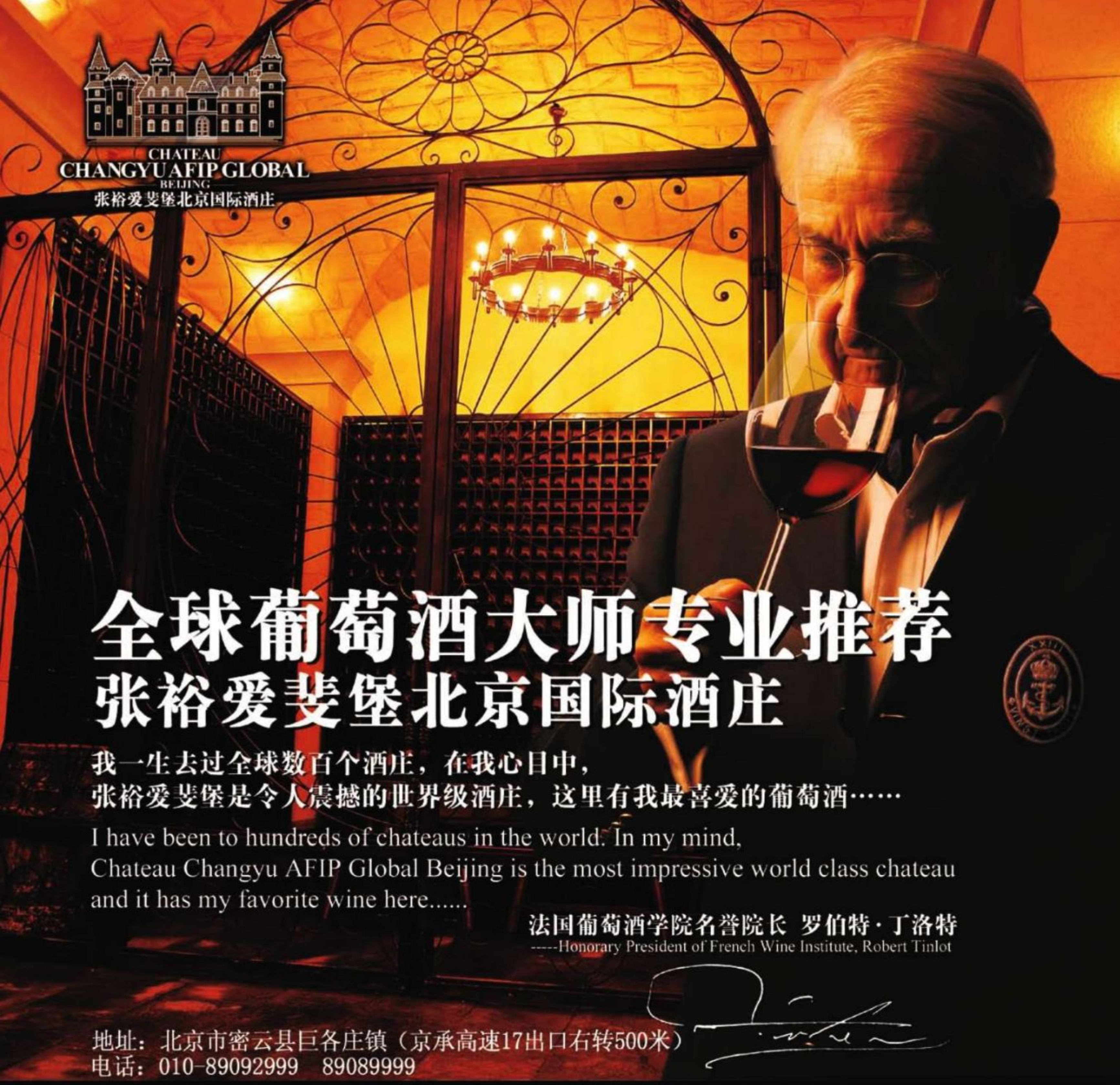

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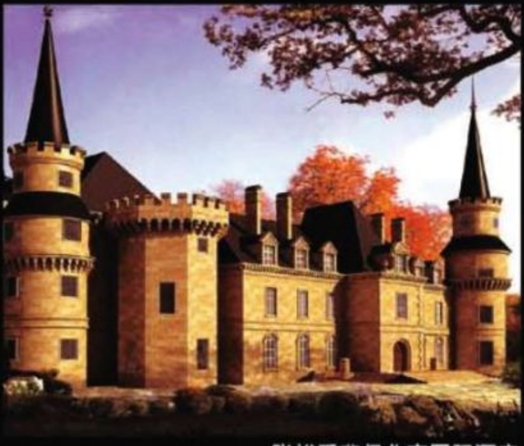

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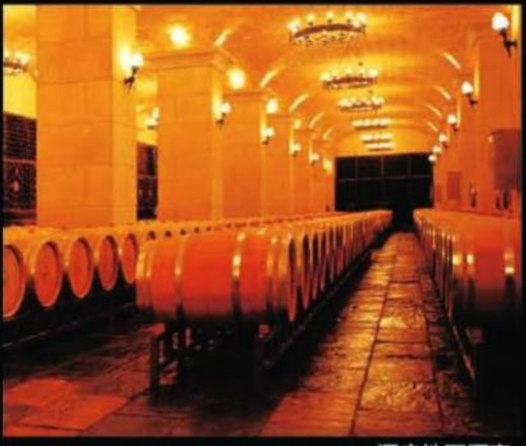

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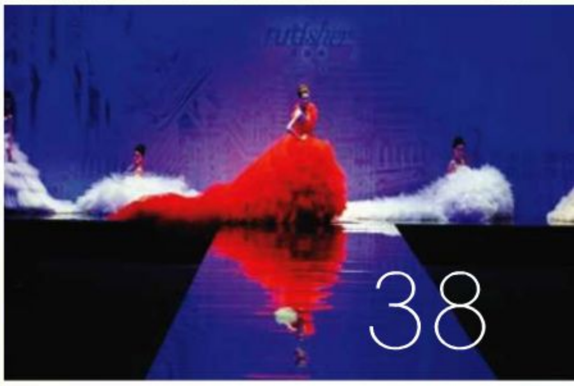
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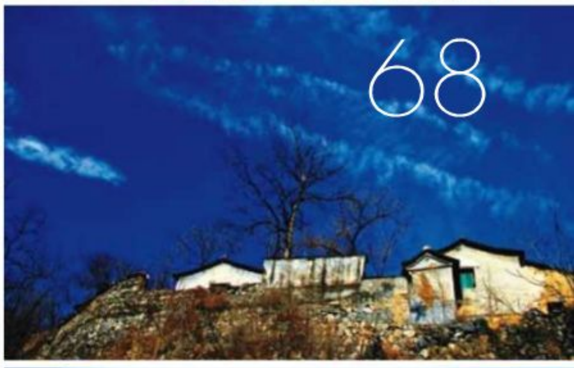
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CHINAPICTORIAL
Travel Destination of the Month

Tropical Hainan Winter

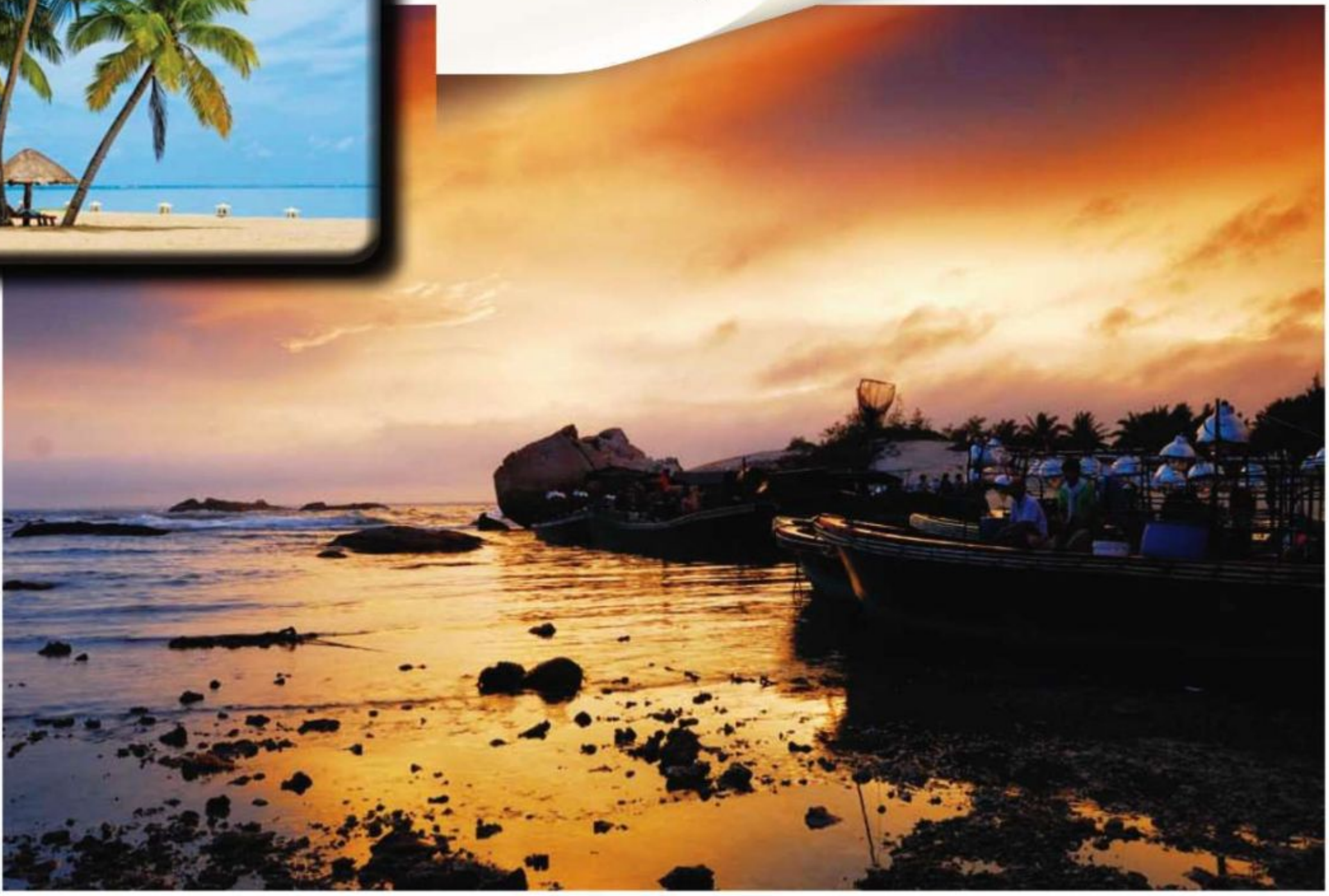
Most people dream of spending winter in a warm place. Located at the southernmost tip of China, Hainan Province is synonymous with blue skies, crystal clear seawater, pristine beaches, and palm tree shadows.

Historically, Hainan was once a wild, undeveloped region populated largely by exiles. Su Dongpo (1037-1101), a literary giant of the Song Dynasty, was once exiled to Hainan for political reasons. But when he arrived, he was pleased to find the island heavenly. So, the event resulted in several poems detailing Hainan's beauty. The island is also home to diverse cultures. More than 30 ethnic groups, including Li, Miao, Zhuang, and Hui, inhabit the province. Many have preserved their distinct customs and habits.

Hainan has a tropical, moist, monsoon climate, making it an ideal place to spend winter. With a coastline of more than 1,580 kilometers, most places in Hainan are blessed with white sand, tropical beaches, and abundant sunshine. The province has already constructed many golf courses for tourists.

Generally speaking, there are three basic tourism routes in the province. The first is the east coast scenery tour, the second is the ethnic tour, and the third is the west coast primeval forest tour. And remember, Sanya, China's southernmost city, is a must-visit if you are seriously considering a trip. Although winter in Hainan is warm, bringing a sweater is necessary.

Resting under palm trees. CFP



Stone Park in Wenchang, Hainan. IC

Shanghai-Hangzhou High-speed Railway

A new high-speed rail line connecting Shanghai to Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang Province, recently began operation.

It used to take 90 minutes to complete the 200-kilometer journey. But now, when traveling at 350 kilometers per hour, the high-speed trains take only 38 minutes to shuttle between Shanghai and Hangzhou.

Overseas Service Trade

China's annual overseas service trade is estimated to hit US$300 billion this year, up 20 percent from 2009, a senior Chinese trade official reported recently.

China's foreign service trade had risen rapidly since the beginning of the year, and the momentum is likely to continue. China had the world's fifth largest volume of overseas service trade last year, with totals reaching US$286.8 billion.

Reed Festival

On November 6, the Ninth Nanjing Baguazhou Reed Festival kicked off in Nanjing City. Since 2002, Baguazhou Town has hosted the festival eight successive times. After years of development, the event has evolved into a comprehensive activity.

This year's festival features a plethora of colorful events. Citizens can stroll along rivers, participate in a scientific knowledge campaign, and join an invitational bike competition in Baguazhou.

Icebreaker Sets Off

The Chinese icebreaker, Xuelong, or "Snow Dragon," started its 27th Antarctic expedition on November 11 in Shenzhen.

An expedition team of 193 aboard the vessel will perform scientific research during the 142-day trip. The vessel will first stop in Fremantle, Australia, for three days before it heads to Zhongshan Station, the second Chinese research station in Antarctica.

Three Gorges Promotion in Paris

The 2010 Chongqing Yangtze River Three Gorges Publicity Campaign began on November 8 in Paris, with hopes of attracting more French tourists to visit Chongqing while promoting tourism cooperation and exchange between the two countries.

During the campaign, Chongqing's major scenic spots and characteristics were introduced. A carefully-made video briefed foreign friends about the city, which features time-honored culture, picturesque scenery, and friendly residents.

1,965 Runners

1,965 runners from 56 countries and regions took part in the 2010 International Marathon at the ancient city wall of Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province, on November 6.

The competition featured three events: 5 km, 13.7 km and half-marathon races, all of which ran along the famous city wall with a history of more than 600 years. Additionally, two team events were added this year.

The marathon at the city wall is one of the traditional international competitions in Xi'an. The event was first held in 1993.

Father and son during the competition. by Liu Xiao/Xinhua

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A Chinese magician performs during the Hangzhou International Magic Convention. Xinhua

Magic Convention

On November 9, the Hangzhou International Magic Convention kicked off in Hangzhou, the capital of eastern China's Zhejiang Province. More than 100 magicians from 19 countries and regions attended the week-long convention, including some well-known international masters such as Mirko Callaci from Argentina, David Williamson from the US, and David Stone from France.

This year's convention also included three workshops aiming to exchange new concepts, skills, and trend of the world's magic industry.

Honda Motors

On October 21, Honda released two new motorcycle models at the 9th China International Motorcycle Trade Exhibition: CBF 150-SF produced by Sundiro Honda and RR 150 produced by Wuyang-Honda. With target customers being primarily younger Chinese consumers born in 1980s and 1990s, Honda estimated that in the coming decade, around 20 million motorcycles will be sold in China every year. Honda will continue to research the demands of Chinese clients and develop more motorcycles, in an effort to improve customer satisfaction.

RR150 model produced by Wuyang-Honda.

Fubao Rural Culture Festival

From November 17 to 22, the Second China Fubao Rural Culture Festival was held in Fubao Village, Kunming City, capital of Yunnan Province.

With the theme "demonstrating the achievements of rural development and celebrating ethnic unity," the festival featured eight major events, displaying new development of China's rural areas, farmers, and agriculture.

中国农民艺术节全国乡村歌手大赛
第二届中国福保乡村文化艺术节
新闻发布会

Press conference for the China Fubao Rural Culture Festival.

Largest Polo Club

Team Goldin beat Team UK by a score of 3 to 2 in the inaugural polo match of Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club, which was held on November 4 as part of the opening ceremony at Tianjin's members-only sporting and hospitality venue.

The Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Polo Club features two full-sized international standard polo fields, making it the largest facility of its kind in China. Additional training facilities include auxiliary polo grounds, 150 stables for horses, a theme park, and Tianjin Goldin Metropolitan Hotel.

Players compete in a polo match. ***IC***

Polar Exploration Exhibition

On November 10, a Polar Exploration exhibition, co-hosted by Shanghai Science and Technology Museum and Polar Research Institute of China, opened at the museum. With total floor space of 700 square meters, the exhibition will last from November 10 to February 28, 2011, and is divided into three areas respectively themed "Life at the Poles," "A Place for Scientific Investigation," and "The Power of White."

Organizers included the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau as the world's "third pole" in the exhibition. The event also provided an opportunity for children to meet scientists stationed at China's Antarctic Zhongshan Station face-to-face using remote video conferencing.

Models of sea leopards. ***IC***

A Sea of Culture and Unity

— Opening of the Asian Games in Guangzhou

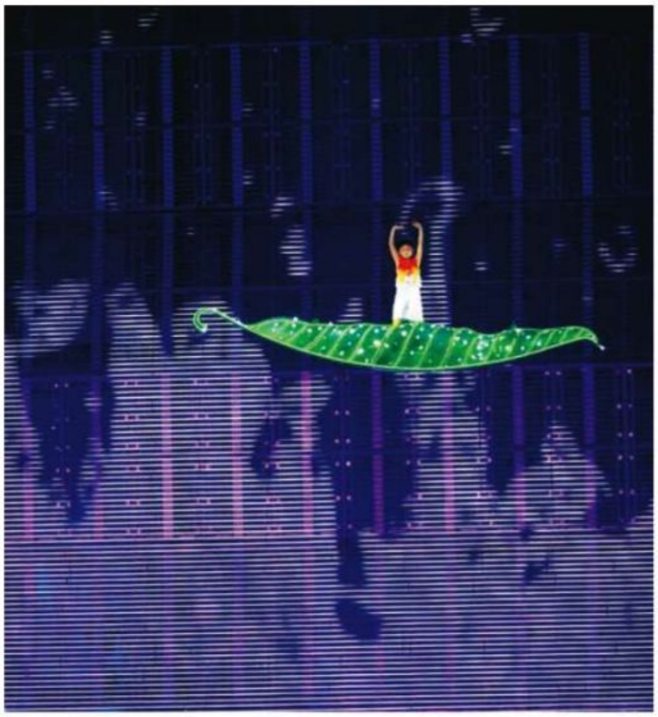
Text by Yi Ling, Xinhua

Chapter 1, The Ship in the Ocean. *by Wan Quan*

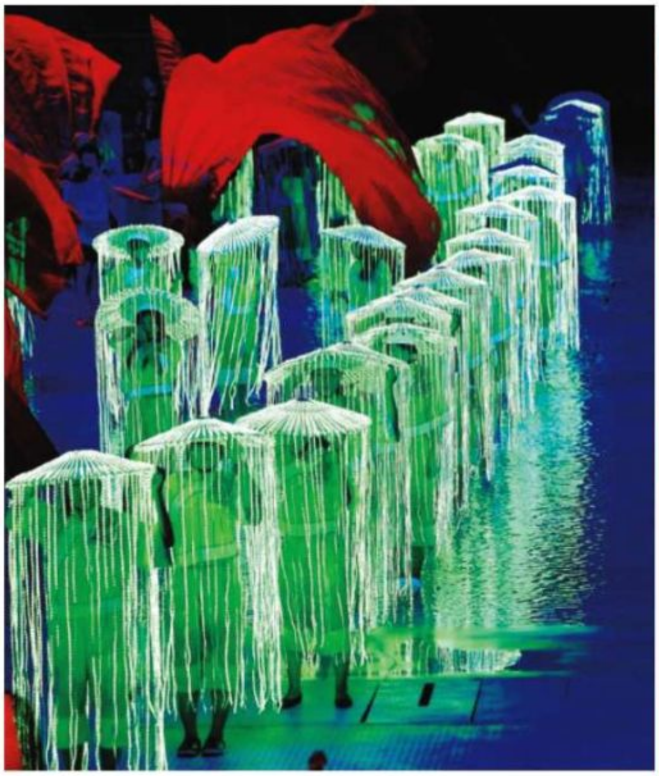
What should you expect of the opening ceremony of the Guangzhou Asian Games after the stunning visual extravaganza presented by Beijing Olympics organizers two years ago?

The hosts of Guangzhou didn't miss the opportunity to reach wider global recognition, with a breakthrough demonstration of the Asiad's values of "solidarity and progress" in the five-hour show called "Sailing."

The spectator stand at Haixinsha. by Xu Xun



A little boy sings a local children's song, Heavy Rainfall. ***by Wan Quan***



Water from the Land, *prelude to the opening ceremony performance,* Set Sail. ***by Xu Xun***

Home safe.
by Wan Quan

A Touch of Guangzhou

Dropping the common practice of holding an opening ceremony at a stadium, the Guangdong Games' organizers moved the center stage onto the boat-shaped island, Haixinsha, on the Pearl River.

In the nimble hands of Chen Weiya, assistant director of the Beijing pageantry in 2008, his new production centered on water, the soul of the host city's coastal origins.

Before the show started, athletes, team officials and dignitaries arrived at the waterside site following an hour-long boat-cruise along the Pearl River.

"Four years ago in Doha, the Asiad's flames rose from the desert, and four years later, we will start our Asian Games' journey here on the Pearl River," said Chen.

"We try to present the beauty of life, the glory of civilizations and the hopes of future through water," he said.

A drop of water trickled down the four huge sail-shaped LED screens to unveil the performances of the opening.

If the Beijing version presented a grand tribute to Chinese civilization in general, Chen's team used a tightly-choreographed 70 minutes to portray the colorful history of Guangzhou from a fishing port to modern metropolis, an epitome of China's revival.

Guangdong culture can be seen in the ceremony, from the little boy singing a local children's song "Heavy Rainfall" on a green crystal palm leaf-shaped boat to a gigantic Red Kapok, the city flower of Guangzhou, blossoming on the water.

Local lifestyles, like fishing, boating, dragon dancing and Guangdong opera performances, was depicted on a silk painting unfolded on the huge screen, while 520 performers later played the Liede drum, a local instrument widely used in festival celebrations.

The most exciting moment of the ceremony came when Chinese Olympic diving gold medalist He Chong, a Guangdong native, ignited the basin-shaped cauldron, by adopting the most traditional Chinese way of celebration – lighting fireworks.

Progress

In part of *The Ship in the Ocean*, 200 fishing women, with red fishing lanterns in-hand, saw off their loved ones on the seashore.

Later, fishermen set sail on a big ship into the stormy sea, fought against the roaring waves, and finally survived to see a peaceful sunrise shown on the LED screen.

"This part is a salute to those who make Guangzhou's success possible and to all Asian people who never surrender in the face of doom or disaster," said Chen. "The ship is like Guangzhou, like China, and the whole of Asia is sailing towards a brighter future."

Later, a section called *Time* recalled this development of Guangzhou and China with an ancient map rolling open on the LED screen.

Situated at the mouth of the Pearl River on the South China Sea, Guangzhou represented the starting-point of the Maritime Silk Road, on which, trade of china, spices, tea and silk was conducted between China and Persian Gulf countries for about 2,000 years.

Since the reform and opening-up policies were launched in the late 1970s, development has been most intense in China's coastal regions.

Riding the economic boom, Guangzhou has quickly transformed into a powerhouse of the country's export-oriented economy, as a pioneer of the economic revolution.

The progress of Guangzhou was demonstrated along with the whole country's development, when the landmark buildings, such as the 600-meter-tall New Guangzhou TV Tower, the Bird's Nest of Beijing and the China Pavilion of the Shanghai World Expo, appeared on the LED screen.

Yet, ecstatic spectators gave the warmest applause to 180 performers who wore white LED lights, when they formed images of huddling, mountaineering, surfing and swimming, in front of the 80-meter high screen.

Unity

As a highlight of the opening, a water-converging ceremony spoke of all Asian people's hopes for unity and harmony.

Forty-five holy water girls, representing 45 Asian countries and regions, held glass containers with water collected from all major waterways of Asia, and poured the water into the holy fire basin which arose from the stage center.

Performers pushed four bridge arms toward the fire basin, and creating a harmony-symbolizing homocentric bridge, while dancers wearing costumes of different Asian countries formed a pattern depicting the emblem of Olympic Council of Asia under the bridge.

The images of smiling people from Asian countries and regions, men and women, old and young, appeared on a screen while images of renowned buildings of each Asian country and region, from China's Temple of Heaven to India's Taj Mahal, were simultaneously displayed.

Liu Peng, president of the Games organizing committee and minister of the General Administration of Sport, hailed the values of Asiad in his opening speech.

"We find that the values promoted at those earlier Games – Solidarity, Friendship and Progress through sport – are as relevant today as they ever were," he said.

However, to the disappointment of Games lovers, there was no joint parade of Koreans in Guangzhou as was featured last time in Doha.

The presence of the representatives from war-ravaged Afghanistan and Iraq somehow reinforced people's faith in the Asiad in promoting peace and unity.

"It's not just participation," remarked Adil Fadhil, secretary general of Iraqi Olympic Committee. "The aim for our team is to show our best abilities, it is not a pleasure trip."

16th ASIAN GAMES
Guangzhou 2010
Thrilling Games Harmonious Asia
IFC

The Asian Games is certainly not the first grand sports event to be used to build the image of a country. No one was surprised when the host of the Guangzhou Games took the opportunity to enhance China's image and spotlight its overall strengths. Meanwhile, the Games offer a window for every participating country to showcase their respective elite cultures while enhancing friendship with other nations.

Prior to the Guangzhou Asian Games, *China Pictorial* interviewed some foreign diplomats in Beijing and Guangzhou, who shared with us their passion for the Games.

Passion for the Asian Games

Interviews with Diplomats in China

Text by Fu Mingxin and Huang Liwei
Photos courtesy of relevant embassies

An Hour-long boat cruise along the Pearl River. by Chen Bixin

Kazakhstan: "Not a Spectator"

On April 2, 2008, during the Beijing Olympic torch relay, Nursultan Abishuly Nazarbayev, president of the Republic of Kazakhstan, became the first torch bearer to carry it beyond China's mainland after it first arrived in Beijing. A self-proclaimed sports enthusiast, Nazarbayev is fully aware of what sports can mean to a nation. "Sport is one of the major means to promote the image of a country in international affairs," he asserted.

Ikram Adyrbekov, Kazakhstan's ambassador to China, agrees with the president. He believes that the Asian Games help bridge Asian countries with abundant cultural resources. Every culture needs respect and recognition for the sake of continental peace and understanding. Therefore, the Asian Games serve as a platform to display the diversity of the cultures of Asian countries.

"Kazakhstan has never been a spectator at the Asian Games or any other Asian competition," Adyrbekov remarked. "We've always been actively participating, fighting to win, and showcasing the spirit of our nation."

As a sports power, Kazakhstan prepared to perform well as usual in Guangzhou. Coincidently, the country is looking forward to its inaugural hosting of the Winter Asian Games, which will commence soon after the Guangzhou Asian Games are completed.

The ambassador was full of confidence: "The Winter Games will showcase our nation's leading position in different sectors of the world and affirm our achievements."

Ikram Adyrbekov, Kazakhstan's ambassador to China.

Uzbekistan: "We Are Ready"

Uzbekistan readied itself for the Guangzhou Asian Games not only through the training of its 250 participating athletes – the government also prepared a series of promotional campaigns, such as evening parties and other activities. Even a special documentary was produced by Guangzhou TV showing Uzbekistan's sports development, athletic training methods, and their fruitful results. The program aired during the Games.

Salakhitdinov Alisher, ambassador to China from the Republic of Uzbekistan in Beijing.

"Our athletes will make full use of their talent during the Asian Games," declared Salakhitdinov Alisher, ambassador to China from the Republic of Uzbekistan in Beijing. "We will endeavor to present our national qualities in tune with the theme of the games – 'Thrilling Games, Harmonious Asia.' The past 15 Asian Games all shared a few things in common: They enhanced the relationship between the peoples of Asia, intensified the cooperation of all Asian cultures, and featured record-breaking performances."

Asked about the Guangzhou Games in particular, Salakhitdinov replied without hesitation. "We believe that it will be the most successful edition of the event ever after China's experience in hosting the Beijing Olympics in 2008."

Thailand: The Aroma of Friendship

Perhaps no country is as familiar with the Asian Games as Thailand.

As a host of four installments of the Games, Thailand has benefited tremendously from showcasing its national strength and competitiveness. Through the nation's four hosting bids, the world saw the great endeavors Thailand made to foster unity, harmony, and friendship in the Asian community. The four Games attracted global attention to Thailand, which further fueled its already-thriving tourism industry.

"Thailand views the Asian Games not as competition, but rather as non-competition," asserted Pisanu

Suvanajata, Consul General of Thailand in Guangzhou. "They are about friendship and communication. Our country will not miss such an opportunity to publicize our culture and image."

Thailand's athletes arrived with fresh fruit from their country.

"Strong relations between Thailand and Guangdong Province are the reason that Thai fruit can join in celebrating the Asian Games with the host city of Guangzhou," explained Pisanu Suvanajata. "Our Prime Minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva, visited Guangzhou last June, followed by a visit by Guangdong CPC Party Secretary Wang Yang to our country in November 2009. During both visits, the two leaders discussed concept of Thai fruit making the trip to the Asian Games, and Secretary Wang Yang supported the idea."

Suvanajata continued, "We proclaim our honor in participating in the Asian Games by presenting GAGOC with three tons of Hom Mali or jasmine rice and five tons of fresh fruit, including mangoes, pummelos, bananas, coconuts, longans, rose apples, durians, sweet tamarinds, mangosteens, and guavas.

"Thai fruit is known for superb quality, great taste and unparalleled juiciness. For those who have yet to taste Thai fruit, it is undeniable that the Asian Games will serve as a wonderful opportunity for Thailand to reach out to them."

According to the consul general, a campaign to promote Thai culture and its native products would be held on November 10 and 11, right before the opening of the Games. "Thai Fruit Paradise for Asian Games 2010 will be held at Lotus Super Center in the Sanyuanli District of Guangzhou," he noted. "The event is open to the general public to taste Thai fruit, participate in Fruit Fun Challenge, and enjoy cultural performances featuring Thai martial arts."

AL,GUANGZHOU

Pisanu Suvanajata, Consul General of Thailand in Guangzhou.

Kim Ik Kyum, Minister Counsellor of the Republic of Korea and president of the Korean Cultural Service, China. by Wang Lei

South Korea: "Sports Are Also Culture"

South Korea has made substantial efforts to promote its national image through cultural dissemination and international public relations, such as the establishment of the Korean Cultural Service, China (KCSC), in Beijing.

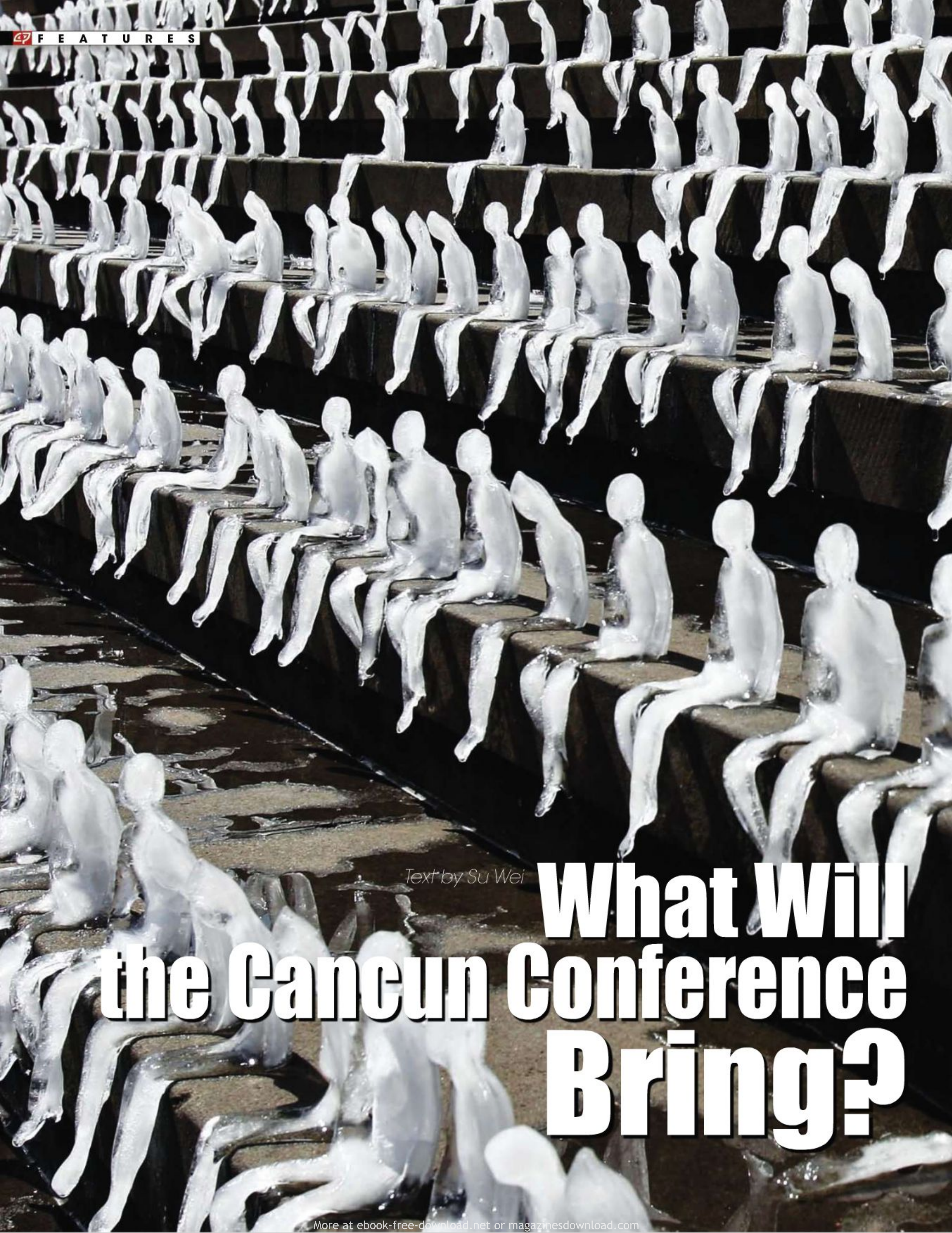
The predecessor of KCSC is the South Korean Embassy Cultural Information Service. Today, 16 Korean Cultural Services in 13 countries continue to spread Korean culture.

"The past era was dominated by political culture," remarked Kim Ik Kyum, Minister Counsellor of the Republic of Korea and president of KCSC, in Beijing. "After the turn of the 21st Century, however, culture and knowledge have played increasingly important roles. This explains why many countries around the world have attached greater importance to the dissemination of their respective cultures. Sport, as a facet of culture, can present both culture and image through competition. Obviously, the optimum way to showcase image and national strength of the host country is through opening and closing ceremonies of events like the Asian Games."

The Guangzhou Games is particularly special to South Korea because the next event will be hosted by Incheon, a coastal city in central South Korea. Along with Korean athletes, the city sent delegations to Guangzhou to learn about the operation and organization of the Games.

Soon after the Games, KCSC will organize taekwondo contests in Guangzhou and neighboring cities.

"Taekwondo is ideal for presenting the qualities of our nation: courageous, firm, tenacious, and able to endure hard work," President Kim explained. "On one hand, such campaigns promote taekwondo, while on the other, they provide an opportunity for the Chinese people to better their understanding about our culture and our country."



Text by Su Wei

What Will the Cancun Conference Bring?

Cancun, Mexico, will host the 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference from November 29 to December 10.

What progress has been made in terms of international climate negotiations since last year's meeting? What is at the heart of the dispute between developed and developing countries? From China's perspective, what will the Cancun conference achieve?

Su Wei, director of the Department of Climate Change under the China National Development and Reform Commission, who has represented China at the series of international climate negotiations since 1989, revealed the answers of such pressing questions.

Ice figures melt on the steps of the concert hall at Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin, Germany. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) hopes to raise awareness about global warming with the event. CFP

A study conducted by scientists from the US National Center for Atmospheric Research and the University of Arizona indicates that the sea level is rising 4-6 meters every 100 years due to melting icebergs at both poles caused by greenhouse gas emissions – much faster than previous estimations. ***CFP***

Su Wei, director of the Department of Climate Change, China National Development and Reform Commission.

Climate change is a major human challenge of the 21st century, and combating it requires joint efforts and cooperation from every country in the world. Over the past two decades, the international community has been working hard to devise a fair, rational way to control greenhouse gases and limit climate change. So far, three important steps have been taken in the form of the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC), the *Kyoto Protocol*, and the Bali Roadmap.

Pre-Cancun Climate Talks

Last year's UN Climate Change Conference was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in a global spotlight. The conference culminated with some encouraging progress such as the *Copenhagen Accord*, but it is not legally binding and does not endorse an international agreement on greenhouse gas emissions beyond 2012. So, the proposed protocol of Cancun's meeting is even more important in making further advancements in the fight against climate change.

To ensure positive progress is made in Cancun, delegates to the UNFCCC agreed to increase pre-Cancun climate talks from two to five. Bonn, Germany, hosted the first three meetings in March, June and August, respectively. The fourth talk was held in Tianjin, China, from October 4 to 9.

Some progress was made at those international talks. Already, both the UNFCCC Working Group and the *Kyoto Protocol* Working Group finished drafting documents for further discussion and debate. But, there is still a tremendous dispute between developed and developing countries relating to their respective responsibilities in addressing climate change.

Developed countries tend to stress common responsibility, and suggest that all countries take meaningful action to address climate change. They support major developing countries setting quantified emission reduction targets. They stress promoting international cooperation through small group negotiation, and support weakening or even replacing the role of the UNFCCC and the *Kyoto Protocol* as the primary channel of international cooperation. Furthermore, they emphasize the use of market-based instruments and tend to push for minimizing their responsibility in offering financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing countries.

Developing countries stress that the major cause of climate change is unconstrained emissions produced by developed countries during their process of industrialization, and per capita emissions remain considerably higher in developed countries, so they should take primary responsibility for climate change, take the lead in reducing emissions by setting significant quantified targets, and make contributions in terms of financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing countries.

Developing countries should, when national conditions permit, and with financial and technological support of developed countries, take measures to mitigate climate change.

China's Stance

With a sense of responsibility not only to its own people, but also to every world citizen, the Chinese government has attached great importance to addressing climate change, and advocates combating it through practical, effective international cooperation in accordance with the following principles:

1. Use the UNFCCC and the *Kyoto Protocol* as the starting point, with focus on the mandate of the Bali Roadmap. The UNFCCC and the *Kyoto Protocol* constitute the basic framework and legal basis for international cooperation in addressing climate change, which have already earned the approval of the international community and serve as the foundation governing the implementation of the Bali Roadmap. The Bali Roadmap features arrangements in terms of mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financial support, while determining further quantified emission reduction targets for developed countries for the second commitment period of the *Kyoto Protocol*.

2. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities: Developed countries should take responsibility for their historical cumulative emissions as well as their current high per capita emissions and change unsustainable lifestyles to substantially reduce their emissions. They should provide financial support and transfer technology to developing countries. Developing countries will, in the course of pursuing economic development and eradicating poverty, take proactive measures to adapt to and mitigate climate change.

3. The principle of sustainable development: Overall framework for sustainable development, economic development, poverty eradication and climate protection should be considered in a holistic and integrated manner to find win-win solutions and to ensure developing countries retain their right to develop.

4. Mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and financial support on equal footing with equal priority: Mitigation and adaptation are integral components of combating climate change and should be given equal treatment. However, mitigation can be a daunting task spread over long periods of time, whereas the need for adaptation is more real and urgent in developing countries. Economic power and technology are indispensable means of achieving both mitigation and adapting towards minimal climate change. The fulfillment of commitments by developed countries in providing financing, technology transfer and capacity-building support to developing countries is essential for developing countries to effectively mitigate and adapt to climate change.

On the basis of the UNFCCC and the *Kyoto Protocol* and following the requirements of the Bali Roadmap, China will, in light of its national conditions, agree to international obligation suitable to its growth phase, due responsibility and actual capacity, while taking effective measures and actions to address global climate change.

China's Expectations for the Cancun Conference

As an active, constructive participant in international climate change talks, China hopes the Cancun conference will, with the current framework of international laws, reach a legally binding consensus to implement the Bali Roadmap through lawful negotiation mechanisms of the UNFCCC and the *Kyoto Protocol* working groups.

First of all, China hopes the Cancun conference will determine quantified emission reduction targets for developed countries for the second commitment period of the *Kyoto Protocol*. The first commitment period will expire at the end of 2012, so a pressing task of the Cancun conference is to make considerable progress in negotiating developed countries' emission reduction targets for the second commitment period, thus paving the way to and laying a foundation for future climate talks.

China also hopes that the conference will solve problems concerning mitigation, adaptation and financial support as well as technology transfer through negotiations of the *Kyoto Protocol* Working Group. The negotiation should be conducted with regard to the Bali Action

60
WWF"地球一小时"北京
10年3月27日 故宫博
March 27
60
WWF"地球一小时"北京
WWF

March 27, 2010: The launch ceremony of Earth Hour, an environmental campaign sponsored by the WWF, at the Forbidden City in Beijing.

Plan, and is expected to determine quantified emission reduction targets for developed non-*Kyoto Protocol* parties (primarily the United States), and ensure that such targets correspond to those of other developed countries. Developed countries should fulfill their commitments to provide financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing countries, so that the latter can have the capacity to mitigate and adapt towards less climate change. Particularly, the Cancun conference should formulate a specific plan to make sure developed countries fulfill their Copenhagen pledge to create a US$ 30 billion fast start fund, which is key to building mutual trust between developed and developing countries.

With financial, technological and capacity-building support from developed countries, developing countries

A coal-fueled power station in Retford, United Kingdom, emits large quantities of smoke. *CFP*

March 20, 2010: A severe sandstorm hits Beijing, and two tourists cover their with masks in Jingshan Park near the capital's Forbidden City. CFP

will, in the light of their national conditions and under the framework of sustainable development, take actions to mitigate climate change.

Of course, realizing every goal is no easy task. Many difficulties remain in terms of fulfilling the mandate of the Bali Roadmap, especially when the current emission reduction targets of developed countries are far less than developing countries' expectations, and developed and developing countries have sharply contrasting opinions on whether the *Kyoto Protocol* should be voided. However, everyone can agree that international cooperation is the only way to tackle climate change. Just as it has been doing previously, China will join hands with all other countries to help the Cancun conference achieve overall, balanced and legally-binding results under the Bali Roadmap.

Wind generators on the coast of Taizhou City, Zhejiang Province. ***CFP***

Low Carbon Leads to Better Life

Text by Wang Shuo

On October 31, 2010, the Wujin Hi-Tech District of Changzhou City, Jiangsu Province, hosted the inauguration of the province's first Low-Carbon Demonstration Area, Low-Carbon Technology Innovation Base, and Building Energy Conservation and Green Architecture Demonstration Area. A few months earlier, on July 5, Wujin received the United Nations (UN) Habitat Scroll of Honor Award from the UN Human Settlement Program and became China's first "Living Practice City."

In recent years, Wujin has received wide acclaim for its constant endeavors to develop the low-carbon industry. Today, it is hard for visitors to imagine that the district was once plagued by heavy pollution from its fast industrialization, which caused a blue-algae outbreak in nearby Taihu Lake, sparking nationwide criticism.

Economy Goes Green

Located in southern Jiangsu Province, a relatively developed region featuring the cities of Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou, and Zhenjiang, Wujin was a leader in the development of township enterprises during the 1980s, building a reputation as the birthplace of the "Southern Jiangsu Mode," due to its industrialization success through developing township businesses. In the 1990s, however, the district lagged behind in China's new cycle of economic growth characterized by more export-oriented business.

"Compared with its counterparts in southern Jiangsu, Wujin has inferior natural conditions," explains Shen Ruiqing, member of the Standing Committee of the Municipal Party Committee of Changzhou and secretary of the District Party Committee of Wujin. "It was a leader in township enterprise development, but this also caused severe environmental problems. The blue-algae outbreak in Taihu Lake set off alarms related to local environment protection. We then realized that Wujin could shift its focus from industrial civilization to an ecological civilization. Profits should not always be the top priority during the course of development."

Wujin decided to develop the local economy through technological innovation instead of resource consumption. The key was to encourage emerging industries that strive towards green GDP. In 2005, when the *Plan of Construction of Wujin Ecological District of Changzhou City* was enacted, Wujin entered the fast lane of ecological construction. Wujin became the first to introduce an official appraisal system that factors in both GDP growth and ecological protection. According to the system, environmental protection achievements earn twice the value of GDP growth. Also, Wujin's government adopted a one-vote veto in environmental assessment.

In recent years, Wujin has invested 11 billion yuan in "green modernization." It shut down 845 environment-polluting projects and enterprises, including some small chemical and dyeing factories, and added 6,667 hectares of vegetation, bringing the urban green coverage ratio to 49 percent. Now the "home of flowers and seedlings" in China, Wujin's Jiaze Town features an excellent ecological environment, but less developed industry. "Thanks to the current appraisal system, Jiaze can focus all of its energy on flower and seedling cultivation," reports a local official, "and turn itself into an ecological model for the entire Yangtze River Delta."

In today's Wujin, emerging industries such as equipment manufacturing, electronics, information technology, new material, new energy, and biological pharmaceuticals have surpassed traditional industries that were once glorified during the "Southern Jiangsu Mode" period, such as flooring, textiles, chemicals, and stainless steel pipe manufacturing.

Still, Wujin set ambitious goals for the coming years: reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 10 million tons; increase the output of its low-carbon industry to 100 billion yuan; introduce 1,000 manufacturing, service and overseas innovation teams to meet requirements of developing low-carbon industry; construct low-carbon buildings with total area of 10 million square meters on the east bank of West Taihu Lake; invest at least 100 billion yuan in low-carbon industries; and introduce 1,000 items of low-carbon technology.

New Energy Industry Matures

When entering the headquarters of Jiangsu New United Wind Power Equipment Co., Ltd. (NUWPE), the largest wind power enterprise in Changzhou, visitors are often stunned by its spacious workshops and cutting-edge manufacturing and testing equipment, as well as experienced employees busily manufacturing, testing, installing, and packing wind generators to be sold across China and even abroad.

"Presently, China's wind power industry is still in the early phases," remarks Ge Yaqin, vice president of NUWPE. "Further development requires independent innovation. China needs to upgrade its independent research capacity and build its own brands to be more competitive in international markets. From the very beginning, this has been our company's primary goal."

In May 2006, NUWPE first set foot in the wind power industry. At the time, it was one of only a few Chinese enterprises capable of mass production of GW-level wind generators, with the highest localization rate in key wind power equipment. However, municipal leaders of Changzhou, even those of Wujin District, couldn't reach a consensus on new energy development. No one expected that new energy industry in China would mature so fast in the following years.

Workers from NUWPE install a wind generator.
Xinhua

These days, NUWPE is a household name in new energy circles. In 2009, it realized an output totaling 800 million yuan, and that figure is estimated to more than double to 2 billion yuan in 2010. To meet the fast-growing demands of both domestic and international markets, the company began building a second-phase project in Wujin, with a total investment of 2.3 billion yuan. Today, Wujin is home to nearly 30 wind power equipment manufacturers supplying auxiliary products to NUWPE.

NUWPE is now an icon of Wujin's development of new energy.

According to an official from Wujin Economics and Trade Bureau, when the district's first new energy enterprise, Jiangsu Shunfeng Photovoltaic Technology Co., Ltd., was established in 2005, it triggered a chain reaction of exponential growth amongst new energy firms in Wujin, such as GPPV, Zhonghong Photovoltaics, and Zhuorun Wind Power. Together with new companies emerging in the past couple years such as Zhonghong and Huashang, they have formed a new energy industry cluster devoted to developing better solar power, photovoltaics, LED, wind power equipment, and new energy vehicles. Wujin is also home to emerging biodiesel research and development companies such as Kate Oil.

Thin film solar technology has been widely used in agricultural production.

Through industrial upgrades, Changzhou injected vigor into its development of new energy and low-carbon industries.

Statistics show that almost all of China's leading new energy enterprises are settling in Wujin, and the district's new energy industry has sustained an astonishing annual growth rate of 50 percent over the past several years.

The Road to Low-Carbon Society

In June 2010, Jiangsu announced Wujin Hi-Tech District as its first low-carbon demonstration area at the United Nations Pavilion during the Shanghai World Expo. Today, Wujin is exploring the road towards a society featuring hi-tech industry, low-carbon communities, and low-carbon transportation.

However, low-carbon development remains a controversial topic in academic circles. For instance, Professor Yu Hongbing of Nankai University argues that there are still no universal definitions of concepts related to low-carbon industry and low-carbon economy, and China has yet to formulate clear assessment criteria.

It was reported that in 2009, China passed the United States in terms of investment in clean energy. In that year, China invested US$34.6 billion in new energy fields such as wind and solar power, almost twice as much as the United States did during the same period. However, behind the massive investments in polycrystalline silicon and wind power equipment industries are repetitive construction, low-level technological innovation, and low-level industrial chains.

Some experts doubt whether Wujin can maintain its low-carbon development without China's fiscal support of the new energy industry. Throughout the world, severe economic bubbles have decimated some new energy industries, and the demand in the Western market has begun to shrink.

One thing is certain: Wujin made a bold decision to seek profits developing a new industry that is full of uncertainties.

Statistics show that Wujin realized outputs of 5 billion yuan in new energy in 2007, and the figure jumped to 8.5 billion yuan in 2008 and 12 billion yuan in 2009. New energy has become one of the district's fastest-growing and most encouraging sectors.

Wujin has also made considerable progress in urban construction. Countless lawns, lakes, orchards, and paddy fields transformed the town into an aquatic dreamland featuring blooming flowers and poetic Southern China style.

Regardless of all of the profits and debates, perhaps Wujin's proudest achievement has been that during 2009, local air quality index was declared "Good" or "Excellent" on 90 percent of days, and COD and CO2 emissions were reduced by 18.1 percent and 22.9 percent, respectively, compared to 2005 figures.

Farmers in Yanzhuang Township compress and pack wheat straw, which will be processed into methane for daily use. Methane is already popular in 30,000 rural households across the county. ***Xinhua***

A Model Green Countryside

Songxian recycles its way to prosperity

Text by Zhong He

Solar technology has been adopted to toast tobacco, effectively saving energy.

The use of methane is already popularized amongst a third of local farming households, solar heat pumps are employed for tobacco toasting, and several industrial zones have been committed to developing recycling. To the untrained eye, Songxian County in Henan Province may appear as a typical Chinese rural area, but it has been working remarkably to build a successful model low-carbon countryside.

In October 2010, the state-level impoverished county was designated as a pilot area for sustainable development, in honor of its firm adherence to the practice of a low-carbon lifestyle.

Methane Mode

"Before we started using marsh gas, every year we used more than 2,000 kilograms of firewood for cooking alone," recalls Li Junhua, a villager of Quli in Songxian's Fanpo Township. "Burning wood required longer cooking time and considerably more effort and produced dust and heavy smoke. Back then, every village household raised pigs, and sewage from the pig pens drained directly into our ditches or watercourses, which caused a horrible odor when it rained." Today, thanks to the construction of methane tanks, all of these problems are history. "Our kitchens, toilets, and yards are clean, and even mosquitoes and flies are rarities," adds Li.

According to Li's calculation, for a family of five raising five pigs, a methane tank with a capacity of 8 cubic meters saves about 2,400 kilograms of firewood each year, the equivalent of 800 trees.

While enjoying a cleaner and more convenient life after the introduction of marsh gas, farmers use biogas as a fertilizer to replace chemicals and pesticides, thus improving agricultural quality and production. Currently, Quli Village is developing a fruit industry by taking advantage of methane.

According to Ren Pingmin, deputy director of Songxian County Agricultural Bureau, since 1995, the county has been using the "three connections" method, which enables the methane tank to be constructed beneath the pig pen and toilet, so that both human and animal waste goes straight into the biogas digester, which in turn produces biogas slurry, residue and gas after anaerobic fermentation. So far, of the county's 120,000 farming households, more than 40,000 use methane tanks, each one capable of adding 1,500 yuan to their annual income.

In recent years, as an important biomass energy, marsh gas has won considerable attention from both central and local governments and is becoming more popular across vast rural areas. By the end of 2010, rural Chinese households using the energy are expected to reach 40 million.

"The state offers a 1,500 yuan subsidy to construct each methane tank," Ren Pingmin remarks. "Without the governmental subsidy, methane use would still develop, but at a much slower speed. Today in Songxian, farmers consider it a cutting-edge trend to develop biogas, and many younger residents constructed a methane tank to help improve their parents' lives, dubbing it a 'Piety Tank'."

Solar Heat Pump

On October 25, villagers of Yangwan in Dazhang Township excitedly removed toasted tobacco from their new solar baking houses. This autumn, the Songxian Branch of the Luoyang Municipal Tobacco Corporation and the Chinese Academy of Sciences jointly developed solar heat pumps and erected solar tobacco baking houses in Yangwan Village. According to Zhao Shimin, deputy manager of Songxian County Tobacco Bureau, such a toasting method can reduce costs by 50 percent and carbon emissions by 40 percent.

Tobacco is the major cash crop of Songxian, which includes more than 2,000 hectares of tobacco fields. In years past, the county burned about 3,000 tons of coal annually for tobacco toasting alone. The introduction of solar heat pumps will significantly reduce costs, and when next year's tobacco harvest season arrives, even more solar toasting houses will be operational.

Additionally, Songxian has implemented the technology in other fields. "We use solar heat pumps to dry fungus and mushrooms from the mountains," Songxian Magistrate Li Dawei illustrates. "The technology can also be used to dry sludge. Now, the sludge from our sewage plant is dried by pressure, but still contains 80 percent water, which means it occupies a lot of space, requires high transportation costs, and pollutes the environment. After solar heat pumps are adopted, the water content of the sludge will drop to 20 percent and its volume will be reduced by 20 percent. Ground dry sludge can also be used as fertilizer for farming after processing. This technology will undoubtedly benefit our county's future development."

The county's short-term plans also include the application of solar energy in lighting and heating. "All new houses will be equipped with solar panels, providing hot water for bathing and ensuring that daily electricity is provided even without a power grid," adds Magistrate Li.

Presently, solar heaters are already popular at schools in Songxian, and the apparatus can provide enough warm water for 100 students to take a bath.

Recycling Economy

On September 10, 2010, the Third China Fluorite–Fluorine Chemical Industry Summit Forum concluded in Luoyang, Henan. The Songxian Non-Metal Co., Ltd. of Luoyang Mining Group outbid its competitors to sign a 160-million-yuan deal with Beijing Yingfeng Jiashi Investment Management Co., Ltd., Shanghai Jiudi Investment Management Co., Ltd., and Wuhan University of Technology to jointly build a recycling industrial base for the fluorine chemical industry on the Central Plains.

Like most Chinese rural areas, Songxian is faced with the challenge of maintaining steady development while protecting the environment. In December 2008, to realize sustained development while saving energy and reducing emissions, the county government decided to establish Songxian Industrial Zone, Fanpo Recycling Industrial Park, and Tianhu Industrial Park, which are expected to cover a total of 7.7 square kilometers after completion.

Fanpo Recycling Industrial Park is committed to intense processing of minerals such as gold, molybdenum, and fluorite. According to Zhang Hongbao, general manager of the Songxian Non-Metal Co., Ltd. of Luoyang Mining Group, the park will primarily consist of AHF (anhydrous hydrogen fluoride) production enterprises, complementary concentration plants providing raw materials for AHF production, and tailing treatment mills. Additionally, it will produce potash feldspar with AHF production byproducts. The chemical plants' excess heat will fuel ore dressing, industrial waste water will be purified in dressing plants, and the waste residue collected in dressing plants will be used in brick factories. With such a complete industrial chain, industrial waste water, waste residue, and waste gas will all be effectively recycled, which will conserve energy and reduce emissions to almost nothing.

In fact, in terms of developing a recycling economy, Songxian already has past successes.

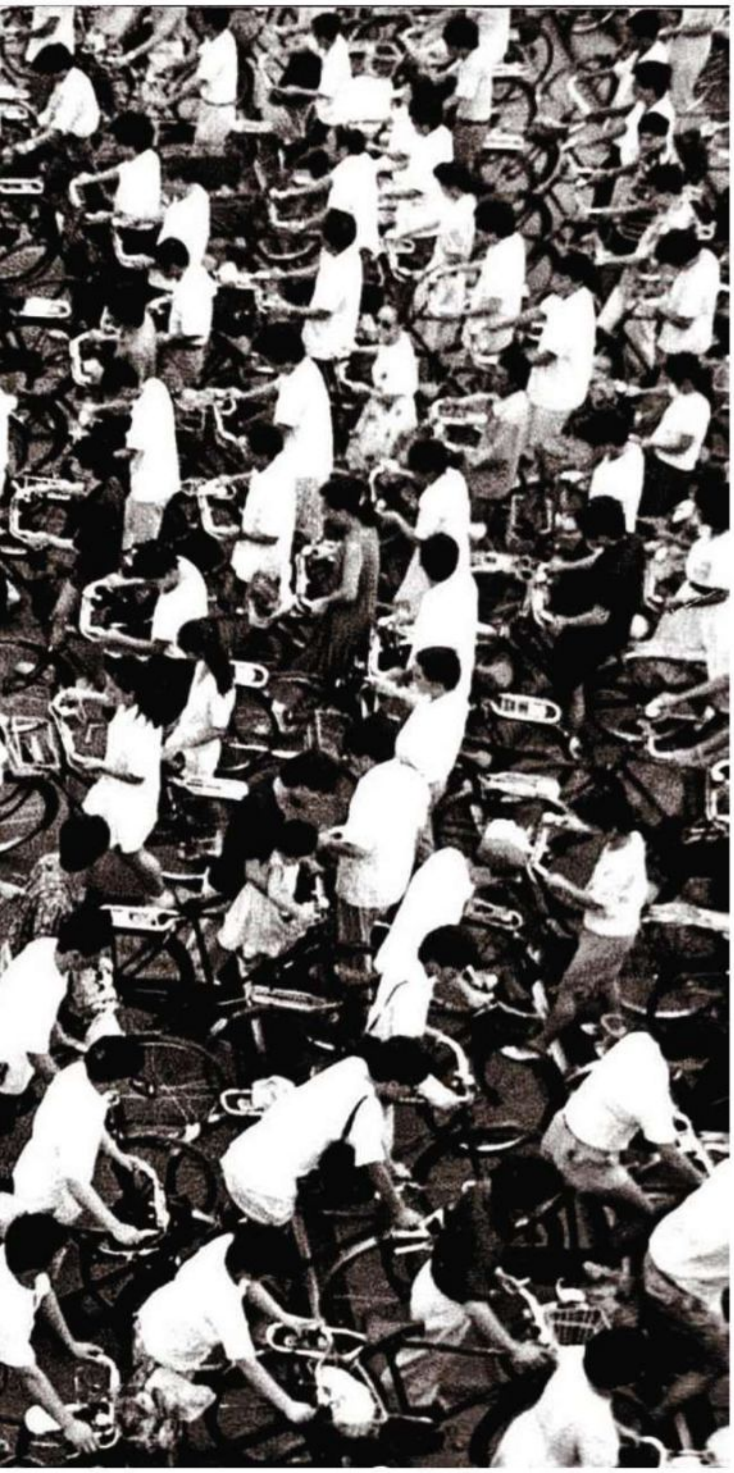
Songxian boasts abundant gold deposits. In the past, its gold sand was transported elsewhere for smelting, which deprived the county of a large portion of output value, added value, and revenue. To make sure that valuable mineral will benefit locals as much as possible while reducing gas emissions from truck transportation, China National Gold Group Corporation joined Songxian to establish a gold smelter with an annual capacity of 40,000 tons. However, smelting produces sulfuric acid, which is dangerous and costly to be transported elsewhere. Coincidently, when combined with calcium fluoride, the leading component of another local resource, fluorite, sulfuric acid forms anhydrous hydrofluoric acid, a popular material used in refined chemicals. Fittingly, Songxian established a fluorine chemical enterprise next to the gold smelter to conveniently produce anhydrous hydrofluoric acid.

"Previously, we transported fluorite powder to a mining area for processing, but the tailings destroyed farmland and forests and polluted the environment in general," Magistrate Li explains. "Later, to conserve the eco-environment, we moved the plant to the industrial park, thus providing an example of a circular economy developed by recycling waste residue so that production efficiency is increased and costs are reduced."

Government organizes professionals to provide technical support for methane usage in rural areas.
Xinhua

Two-Wheeled Metropolis

Text by Qian Qian



Bicycles were once the primary means of transportation in China. by Wang Wenlan

Every morning, Deng Minhua, of western Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province, swipes her card at a public bicycle rental station near her home. According to leasing regulations, renting a bike for less than an hour is free. Therefore, it costs her nothing to get to work, and more importantly, she no longer worries about terrible traffic.

Today in Hangzhou, 2,051 rental stations offer 51,500 bicycles, each of which averages usage by about five riders a day. In downtown areas, such stations can be found every 300 meters, and 70 percent of them provide 24-hour services. Public bicycles have become a popular means of transportation for more and more citizens of Hangzhou.

A Free Hour

On May 1, 2008, Hangzhou established China's first public bicycle leasing system as part of its public transit.

According to the rules, those between the ages of 16 and 70 with riding skills can rent a bicycle at any leasing station, where they pay with the local public transit IC card, or lay down a 300-yuan cash deposit along with their ID card. It is free for the first hour, 1 yuan for the second hour, 2 yuan for the third hour, and 3 yuan per hour thereafter.

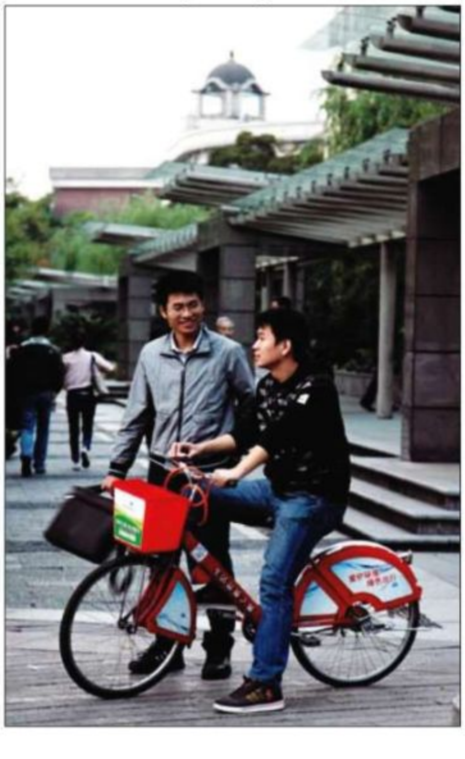
Payment is simple: riders swipe their cards at a POS installed in a bicycle stand. After they are done riding, they can leave the bicycle at any station near their destination and scan the card again.

"This system is more convenient than similar ones in Europe," declares Lu Zhihong, deputy general manager of the Hangzhou Public Transit Group. "Bicycle rental in France, for instance, works through the banking system and takes five minutes. However in Hangzhou, it takes less than a minute to rent a bicycle."

Green Traveling

The results of a recent joint survey conducted by Gallup Organization and Fudan University in Shanghai are astonishing. Hangzhou is far ahead of not only Shanghai and Beijing in urban convenience, but also 30 other big cit-

A Hangzhou green commuter.



公共自行车
Public Bicycle
服务点
Service

A public bicycle rental station by the scenic area of West Lake in Hangzhou.

Simply swipe the card! CFP

ies – and Hangzhou owes much of this success to public bicycles.

During rush hours, taking a bicycle is much quicker.

Deng Minhua, the commuter mentioned earlier, finds her journey to and from the office pleasant. "I get so excited that I want to whistle every time I see traffic jams along my way. I feel as if I were flying on the bicycle I was loaned for less than an hour."

Statistics on Hangzhou's public bicycles from Zhejiang Sci-Tech University reveal that among users, 26.6 percent own a car – which means that increasing numbers prefer using public bicycles. Nearly half of those surveyed use them to commute between home and office, and of 172 car-owning respondents, more than 40 percent rent to travel to work.

"Public bicycle rental may actually be accepted as an effective way to minimize urban pollution," asserts Xu Jianfeng, director of the Institute of Economics under the Zhejiang Academy of Social Sciences.

Experts have calculated that Hangzhou's total daily bicycle mileage equals 60 trips around the globe – and prevents 56 tons of auto-produced carbon emissions.

The Cost

Statistics also show that more than 90 percent of users rent a bicycle for less than an hour, meaning that the vast majority of usage brings no income.

"Monthly revenue tops out at only about 300,000 yuan," explains Zhang Fumin, general manager of the Hangzhou Public Bicycle Transit Service Development Co., Ltd., "but costs total as much as 1.5 million yuan."

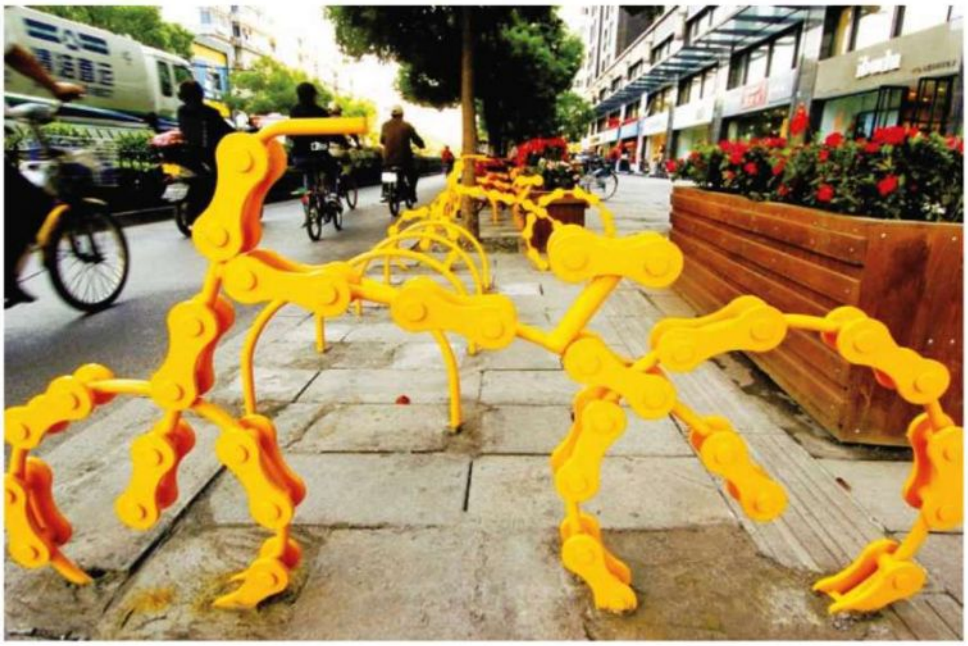
"The government hopes that we can eventually break even so that the service is no burden to tax payers," remarks General Manger Huang Zhiyao of the Hangzhou Public Transit Group.

How could that happen?

The people of the Hangzhou Public Transit Group are making every endeavor. Last October, they attempted selling ad space on the body of bicycles at an auction at the Hangzhou Equity Exchange. The minimum bid was 10 million yuan a year over three years of operation. Unfortunately, no company took the chance.

"We are working on a new model," remarks Tao Xuejun, deputy general manager of the Hangzhou Public Bicycle Company. "We are going to fuse social welfare facilities with certain brands, introducing a sort of convenience store franchise."

In July 2010, Hangzhou Public Bicycle Company



The bicycle stand along Hushu Road South, Hangzhou. Its unique design is both decorative and practical.

signed an agreement with the Hangzhou Branch of the Greatwall International Sports Media for 100 public bicycle stands. "What we are doing is branding," explains Liu Xiao, CEO of the Hangzhou Branch. "These stands will sell second and third-tier beverage brands, lottery tickets, fast food, and other products that have a hard time finding their way into Hangzhou's larger markets."

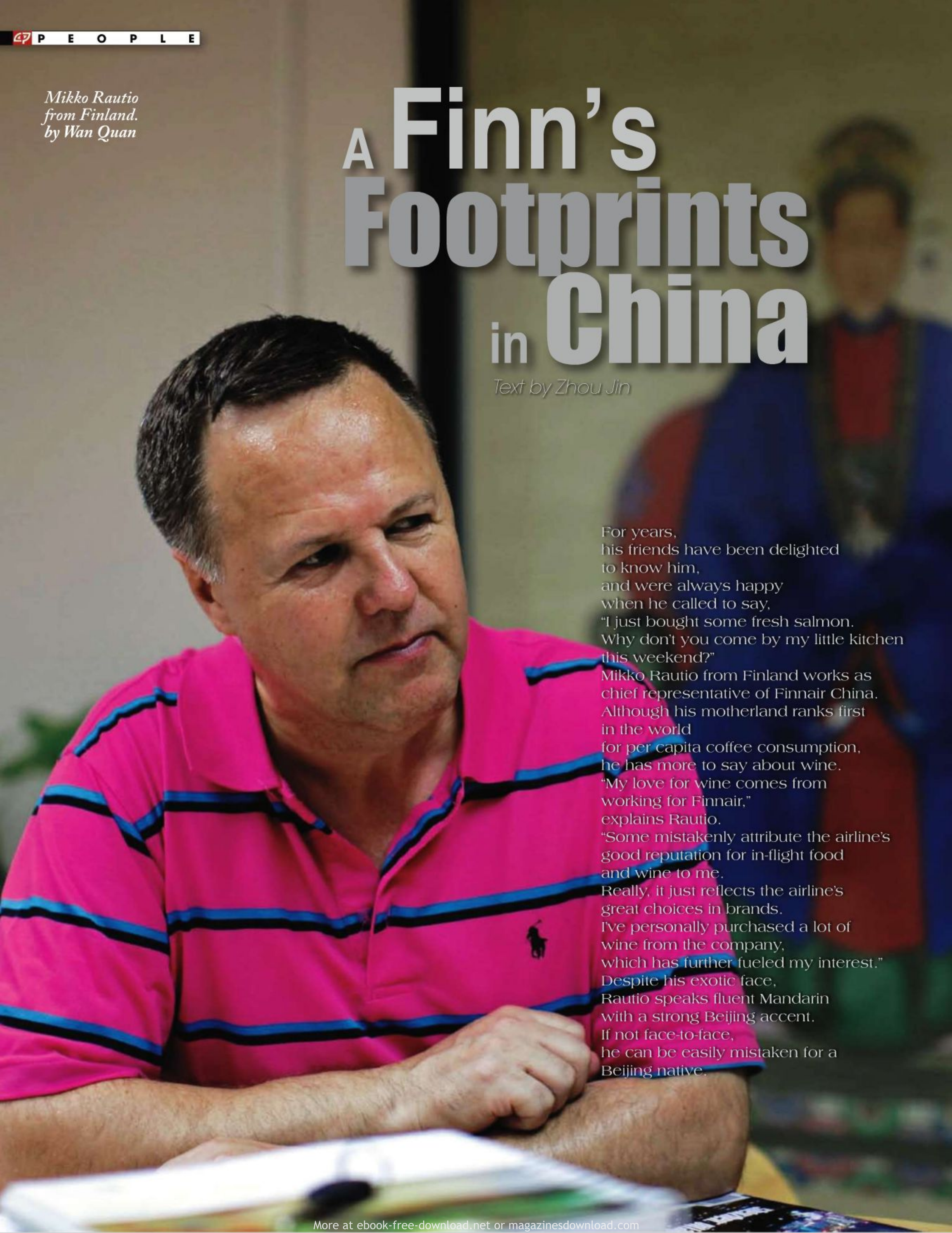
The government of Hangzhou is going to establish a company to protect and promote its self-developed technologies related to public bicycles. "China has seen a dramatic progress in urban management," claims a traffic official from the municipal government. "Many places have laid solid groundwork for such a public bicycle system, which presents business opportunities for us."

Many believe that public bicycle service is a new trend that could help foster the sustainable development of Hangzhou. As planned, Subway Line 1 will open in 2012, by which time at least 200 public bicycles will be available at each subway station.

General Manager Huang Zhiyao is looking even further into the future. "I hope that public bicycles can serve as our fifth transit system after subways, buses, taxis, and boats. In the future, private cars can become obsolete when people get more used to traveling on public bicycles."

October 9, 2010: Visitors examine new bike models at the Hangzhou International Bicycle and Electric Vehicles Exhibition. ***Xinhua***

A special wedding: Bicycles have become part of life for Hangzhouers. ***Xinhua***



Mikko Rautio from Finland. by Wan Quan

A Finn's Footprints in China

Text by Zhou Jin

For years, his friends have been delighted to know him, and were always happy when he called to say, "I just bought some fresh salmon. Why don't you come by my little kitchen this weekend?" Mikko Rautio from Finland works as chief representative of Finnair China. Although his motherland ranks first in the world for per capita coffee consumption, he has more to say about wine. "My love for wine comes from working for Finnair," explains Rautio. "Some mistakenly attribute the airline's good reputation for in-flight food and wine to me. Really, it just reflects the airline's great choices in brands. I've personally purchased a lot of wine from the company, which has further fueled my interest." Despite his exotic face, Rautio speaks fluent Mandarin with a strong Beijing accent. If not face-to-face, he can be easily mistaken for a Beijing native.

A Legendary Life

Mikko Rautio's life has caused him to be in the spotlight for much of the time. As a foreigner living in China, Rautio has experienced many of the country's historic events first-hand, including the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the economic reform and opening-up starting in 1978, and the country's recent dramatic progress.

Rautio came to China with his parents in 1956 when he was only three years old. His father taught at Beijing Normal University while his mother worked as a translator for *China Pictorial*.

"I was 13 when the Cultural Revolution began," Rautio recalls. "I sat through three days and nights on a train to Guangzhou with many other youngsters. My parents realized that they couldn't stop me from traveling, so they put a note with my home address in my pocket in hopes of staying informed in case I ran into trouble."

Rautio went back to Finland at the age of 21 to serve in the military, and he permanently returned to China in 1987 to open a Beijing office for Finnair. Before then, he alternated between living in China and Finland for several years, working for a variety of companies, including his country's most famous global brand, Nokia.

Rautio believes that he was born to work for Finnair in China, and destined to help his countrymen better understand his adopted home.

"Ancient China Is Fading Away"

Two paintings on the wall stand out considerably because they are normally found in ancient Chinese temples. The images sharply contrast the more modern environment found in his Beijing office.

"I like the old city walls still standing in Beijing," Rautio remarks, "and I love the city gates with carved beams and painted rafters."

When asked about the changes in Beijing in recent decades, Rautio recalls the good old days of his childhood. "These days, I still like to visit the Palace Museum [Forbidden City], the less-touched parts of the Great Wall, and the Summer Palace," he notes. "I usually go through the north gate and stroll along the lakeside in tranquility.

"It's a pity that the older scenery, particularly in big cities, has been abandoned, as China constantly searches for the next new thing," he continues. "I was particularly impressed by Hangzhou, which is certainly amongst the most beautiful cities in the nation. Its landscape provides plenty of space for the entire city. During a business trip in the 1980s, I stayed at the Hangzhou Shangri-La Hotel, which is a bit far from downtown. The sun set at about 5 p.m., and I walked along the Su Causeway, a famous scenic spot of West Lake, in the snow as if I was traveling through an ancient Chinese landscape painting. That was really something special."

Like many foreign residents of China, Rautio likes to wander. "I've visited more places than almost anyone else," he claims.

Rautio considers himself lucky to have had so much time to travel around the country. In 1978, he visited Luoyang, Henan Province, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, and Chengde, Hebei Province. In 1981, he visited Chengdu and Chongqing, then both in Sichuan Province, Wuhan in Hubei Province, and Shanghai. "The differences between the cities were huge," he explains. "Chengdu, for instance, became quiet when night fell whereas Shanghai would just begin to wake up when it turned dark. Even that one city has changed so much over the decades. I visited Shanghai in 1995, 1997, and 1998, so I witnessed much of the dramatic changes with sprouting high-rises, expressways, hotels, and a lot more."

Part of his collection from the Qing Dynasty.

Non-Governmental Messenger

June 2, 1988, marked the inauguration of a direct flight between Beijing and Helsinki, capital of Finland. It was the first non-stop flight between Beijing and Europe.

Helsinki is no longer a stranger to the Chinese people.

Today, daily flights connect Finland not only to Beijing, but also to Shanghai and Hong Kong. China has become a major destination for Finnair – accounting for 40 percent of its Asian business. Helsinki has become a hub connecting Beijing with many other European cities.

"Helsinki takes pride in its lake and forest coverage: over 70 percent," smiles Rautio. "That is why I decorate my office with blue and white, which some think is simple. But that's our way. We prefer furniture in natural colors."

Rautio in Peking Opera costume.

A Beijing Duck in Water

In his spare time, Rautio stays busy with numerous hobbies: collecting embroideries from costumes of historical Chinese officials, tasting wine, and entertaining friends in his small kitchen. He endeavors to enjoy every moment of life in Beijing.

Perhaps due to hours of sitting during his regular monthly flight to his hometown, Rautio likes to take walks as much as possible, either in Beijing or Helsinki.

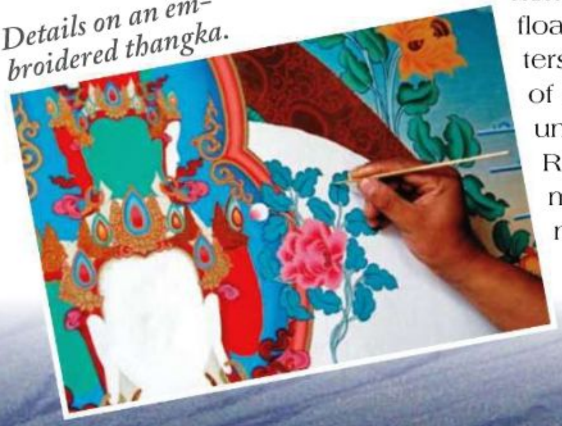
His passion for China has been passed on to his three children, a son and two daughters, who are already fascinated by Chinese culture. It remains to be seen whether the interest will translate into as much exploration as their father has experienced, but it's certainly in the blood.

THANK YOU, THANGKA

Tibetan Art Progresses From Prophets to Profits

Text and photographs by Chen Zhen

Resting atop the "roof of the world," the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, is a "golden valley," as its name, Rebgong, in Tibetan language literally means. Tongren (Rebgong) is the only state-class historical and cultural town in Qinghai Province. More notably, as the birthplace of the renowned Rebgong Art, the area is home to myriad Tibetan artists. With the frequent aroma of yak butter floating through the air, the small county lying more than 3,000 meters above sea level is already mature in its fusion and development of art, business, and tourism. Those looking to explore the local untouched spiritual lifestyles should look elsewhere, because the Rebgong people have chosen to pursue the path of prosperity and material gains rather than sticking to humility like many of their nearby peers.



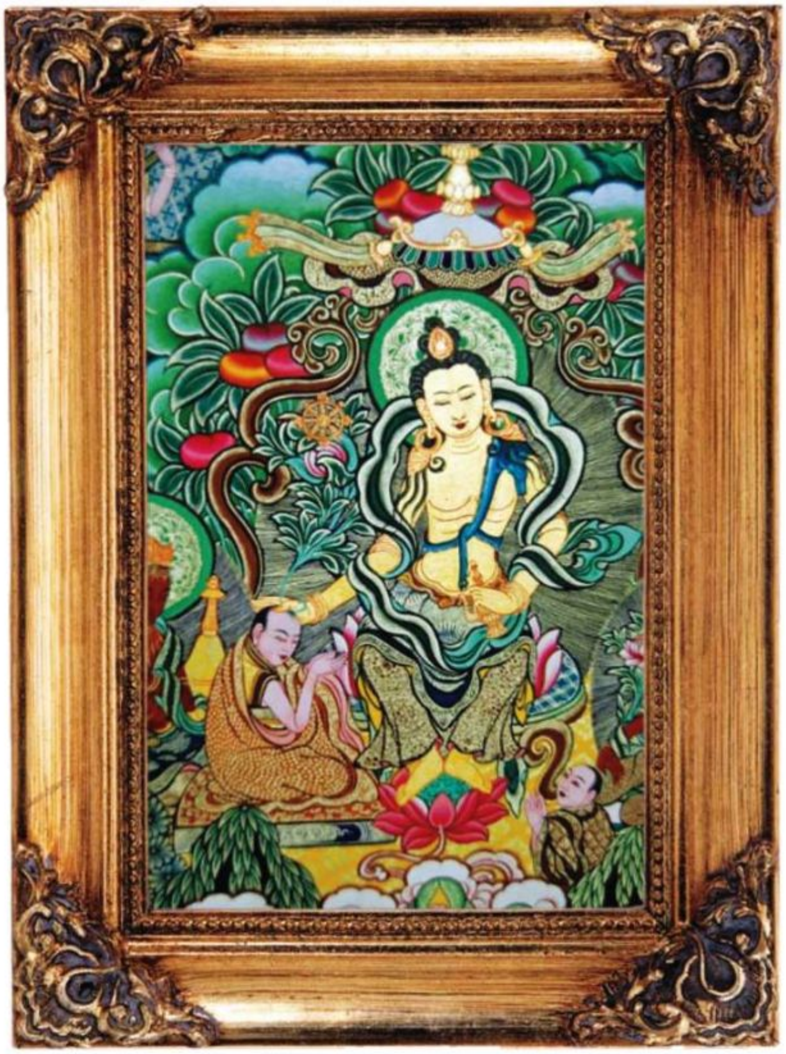
Details on an embroidered thangka.

Offers Determine Painting Techniques

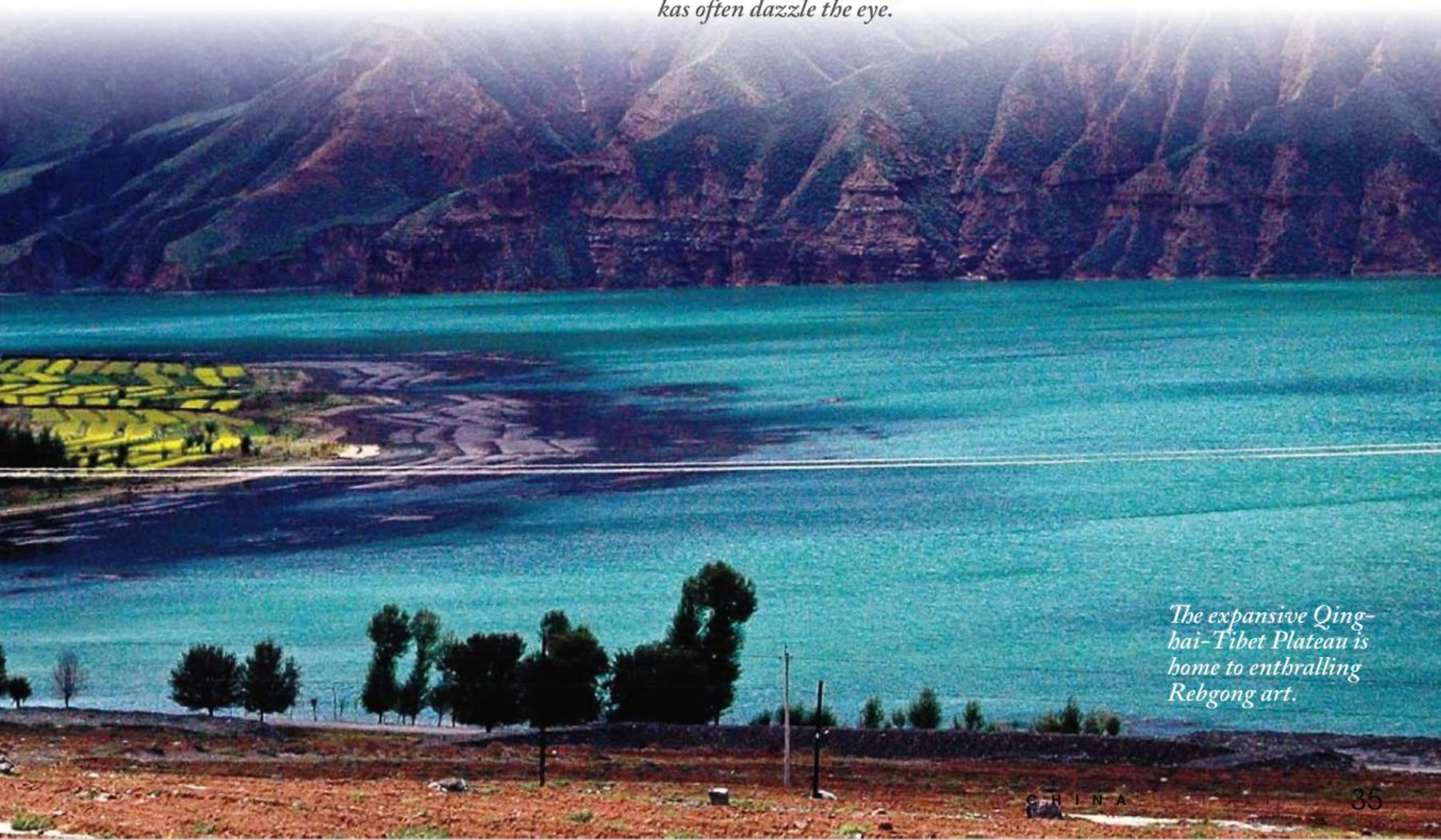
"How much is this thangka painting?" may be the most common question heard on the streets of Tongren, but Gendun Dargye turns the inquiry upside down.

As a child, Gendun Dargye learned the art of thangka (a traditional Tibetan silk painting with Buddhist theme) from his father, the late acclaimed artist Sharu Tsering. The son is now one of the most celebrated thangka masters in Rebgong, and he confesses that the customer's offer for a thangka determines the painting techniques he uses. "Different rates mean different brushwork, which has become an established rule within the industry," he explains. "In my father's era, such practices would be considered disrespectful to the Buddha as a result of excessive desire and an abundance of distracting thoughts. Back then, thangka paintings were created to be priced afterwards." His own works sell well, including an offer exceeding a million yuan. In addition to local monasteries and ordinary people, increasing demand from buyers in large cities like Beijing and Shanghai, as well as foreign countries, has fueled the thangka industry. Those who purchase and resell thangka at a profit sometimes have no idea what is depicted in the painting, and most buyers care little about the content. Rather, most enthusiasts are lured by a fantastic mix of colors and designs, adds Gendun.

"When I was only five years old," he recalls, "television reporters began to visit our home frequently to docu-



Brilliant Rebgong thangkas often dazzle the eye.



The expansive Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is home to enthralling Rebgong art.

Along with thangka, Rebgong art also includes other forms such as sculpture.

ment everything about my family, from my father's artistic creation to our daily lives." Back then, the young Gendun already experienced a taste of fame, and it was not until more than a decade later that he realized the transformation from fame to "profitability." At a New York auction in 1994, a large-format embroidered thangka created for Ming Emperor Yongle (1360-1424) sold for US$ 1 million. Eight years later, the same masterpiece went up for sale again at a Hong Kong auction, this time fetching an astronomical HK$ 30.87 million (US$ 4 million). Although at comparably lower levels, the mainland market rates for thangka paintings have multiplied 10 times in the first decade of the 21st century. In 2002, a Qing Dynasty portrait of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva reached a historic mainland high for thangkas, selling for 55,000 yuan, and the record was soon smashed in 2005 when another Qing-era thangka sold for 825,000 yuan. Current market prices for works by renowned contemporary thangka masters such as Sharu Tsering can range from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of yuan. As thangka's commercial value continues appreciating, the art boom has benefited not only artists like Gendun Dargye but also the entire Rebgong area.

Tongren's Tibetans begin to learn thangka skills from their parents during childhood.

Art Industrialized

Samdoje is a Rebgong artisan whose exceptional thangka painting skill has won him not only a sterling reputation among art lovers but also governmental recognition when his home was officially designated as a tourist venue to experience Rebgong art. In August 2006, the county established an authentication center for professional Rebgong art skill. In addition to surveying and registering local artisans, the center certifies qualifications for those who pass necessary examinations at different levels. An artist's work is priced according to the qualification he holds. Homes of those who demonstrate both excellent artistic skill and high moral integrity are honored with a plaque inscribed with the words "Home of Artist." So far, only 83 households in the county have been awarded the title, and fierce competition between up-and-comers rarely cools down.

Thanks to the official "quality certification," Samdoje's work usually flies off the shelves at markets. He has also passed on the art to his children. When combining his artistic fees with his art tourism earnings, his family now leads a comfortable life in their new cavernous Tibetan-style house, with an annual income nearly 80 times more than when the family worked in farming. Samdoje is not an isolated case. Of all the 446 households in his village, 437 are engaged in Rebgong art, and their yearly per capita income dwarfs other villages in Huangnan Prefecture.

Except for a few paintings purchased by backpackers staying at his home, the majority of Samdoje's finished work goes to a company by the name of Golden Wheel Rebgong Art. The most famous of 10 similar companies in the county, Golden Wheel contracted Samdoje for several years. Visitors to the firm can witness the production process of thangka and piled embroidery, join working artisans, or attend a class about Rebgong art. While selling a variety of art, Golden Wheel also provides customized services. Its owner, Samjebon, in his 30s, has successfully transformed himself from a thangka painter to a businessman. "We built our own brand and established a complete industrial chain from design to production to sales," he illustrates. "Our foreign clients include customers in Nepal, India, Japan, South Korea, and the United States."

Preserving Historical Rituals

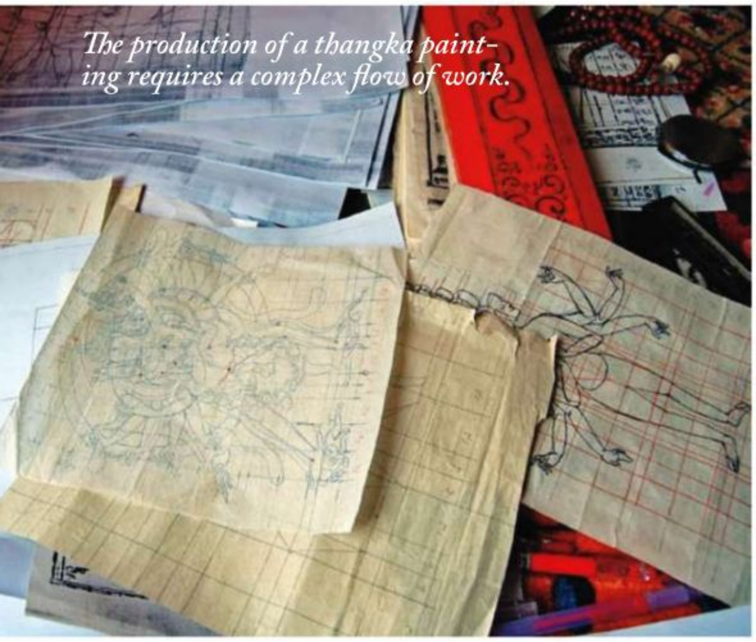
Master Sharu Tsering's unfulfilled wish to establish an institute for the thangka art was eventually realized by his best student, Nyangbon. In August 2007, with a personal donation of 4.36 million yuan, Nyangbon began the process of founding the Rebgong Art Institute by building classrooms and recruiting skilled artists. Students at the academy don't have to pay for tuition or living expenses. Nyangbon admits that although Rebgong Art Institute was designed with the teaching mechanics of modern art academies, it is a traditional Tibetan school at heart. "Many traditional customs related to Rebgong art have been passed down over the centuries," explains the schoolmaster, "such as the support rule, according to which a master teaches and supports his disciples in the first half of his life, while his students in turn support the latter half of the master's life. All historical rituals must remain the same. So, the institute is naturally duty-bound to raise our students, and it would be a shame to Rebgong art rituals if we charged fees for students."

The institute has devoted an entire floor to art exhibition, charging an admission of 10 yuan a visitor. On display are more than 300 thangka masterpieces from Nyangbon's personal vintage collection, including many rare, classic works. Nyangbon and his colleagues share a common belief that nearly all the best thangkas are now under the roof of their institute. While most students study painting in a secluded environment, a few work in the exhibition hall each day so that visiting tourists can see the creation of a thangka painting. In addition to teaching, the 80-plus professional painters employed by the institute also turn over their own work to the school at pre-determined prices. The work eventually ends up with clients, who sign long-term contracts with the institute, pledging financial support that provides the school's primary funding. Within the first year and a half since the institute was founded, its income has already topped 2 million yuan.

Statistics show that in 2007 the gross tourism income of Tongren County was 63.26 million yuan, 73 percent of which came from Rebgong art-related tourism, and of the nearly 700,000 tourists who visited Tongren (including 110,000 from abroad), 60 percent came only for the Rebgong art. As increasing globalization and commercialization present new challenges for many traditional cultures and arts, in this quiet corner of the plateau, a traditional Tibetan art is innovating realistic paths towards sustainable development.

Traditional pigments and techniques for painting a thangka have been handed down for generations.

Many thangka paintings are created by lamas (Tibetan Buddhist monks).


The production of a thangka painting requires a complex flow of work.

FASHION ANDROGYNY

Text by Zhao Yue
Photographs by Mai Tian

Lady or Gentleman?

On October 30, during the most packed show of China Fashion Week Spring/Summer 2011, designer Qi Gang appeared on the runway in gorgeous women's wear. Surrounded by his models, he waved at his curtain call with pride. While handsome male models donned floral dresses, the females applied black lipstick. Qi's collection, titled "Misplaced Love," tweaks runway gender roles. The controversial topic inspired thunderous applause and triggered heated debates in the days following.

Born in 1974, Qi majored in costume design at university in Hangzhou, and graduated in 1998. The talented young man quickly became one of the best-known designers in China. "Misplaced Love" is sated with his personal style, and gorgeous as always. The first half featured primarily haute couture. An accompanying dance elaborated his theme, depicting a love story between three people, whose genders all remained ambiguous. "They are all too beautiful, so no one can make a final decision," Qi explains. He likes the idea that pure beauty itself can be the source of the confusion.

On the same day on the same runway, Taiwan designer Gioia Pan presented her own show. Known as the Queen of Knitwear, Pan continued the androgynous themes with her show titled "Chaos." She applied simple colors such as black, grey, and deep blue on both men's and women's wear, making almost no distinction between clothes for opposite sexes. The sharp contrast, along with startling similarities between Qi and Pan's respective shows, embodied exactly what organizers were hoping to present for audiences.

A model shines on the runway.

Ambiguous Gender or Sticking to the Same?

At recent shows during Milan, Paris, and New York fashion weeks, audiences saw increasingly feminine males and more masculine female models. The once dramatic line between genders is growing vaguer. The same thing happened at Beijing and Shanghai fashion weeks, making the phenomenon something even the most mainstream designers must consider.

Contrasting designers such as Qi and Pan, some still insist on a clear distinction between the genders. Men's wear designer Ka Bin, who took home the Fashion Design Golden Award at this season's event, insists on decidedly masculine men's clothing. Although he presents some women's wear at each show, the former boxer believes that a strong and unyielding vibe should be at the core of men's wear design.

While so many designers and brands have been offering male dresses, feminine accessories, and non-traditional tailoring, other designers like Ka Bin refuse to compromise. In many of Beijing's malls, Ka Bin's designs are easy to find. The garments displayed for consumers are barely different from the designs seen on the runway, so buyers willingly open their wallets. However, Qi's case is quite different. Primarily employed in creating gowns for stars on the red carpet and extravagant costumes for pop singers, Qi's designs remain too extreme for the tastes of mainstream consumers.

Although the runway has become increasingly androgynous, the vast majority of Chinese people still prefer to dress "normally." With such a market in mind, it's hard for clothing manufacturers to trust Qi's designs as much as pop stars may.

Men's wear?

Works of Tsai Mei-yue, a renowned wedding dress designer, are especially suitable for more traditional Chinese girls.

Red dresses are still popular for Chinese weddings.

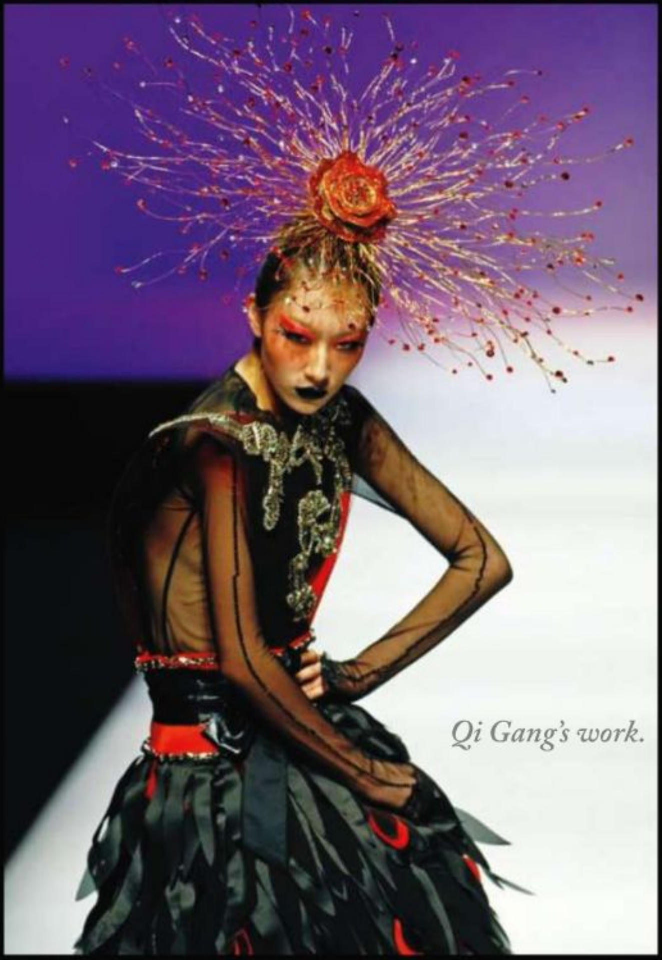
Cloudy Future

Although androgyny hasn't had much impact on China's mainstream clothing trends yet, the future is hard to see.

With more and more Chinese children of the 1990s becoming consuming adults, formerly taboo styles such as afro hair, piercings, and hair dye have followed them into the mainstream. With maturation of this generation, many find defining alternative lifestyles more difficult. Sights that were shocking only one or two decades ago are now commonplace on streets of major Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. The younger generation happily abandons traditionally modest clothing. In some cities, you can see not only men wearing plaid skirts, but also girls in men's wear.

On the other hand, with the increasing daily stress and pressure of the modern world, the gender roles in the workplace are also disappearing, causing business apparel to evolve to more neutral designs.

With expanding market demand, design concepts previously only existing on runways will finally appear in shopping malls and streets. One thing is sure: The debate over fashion androgyny will continue for some time. And China's fashion industry, with the largest market in the world still growing, will forge ahead along with the debate.



Qi Gang's work.

Standing out amongst white dresses.

Gentleman or lady?

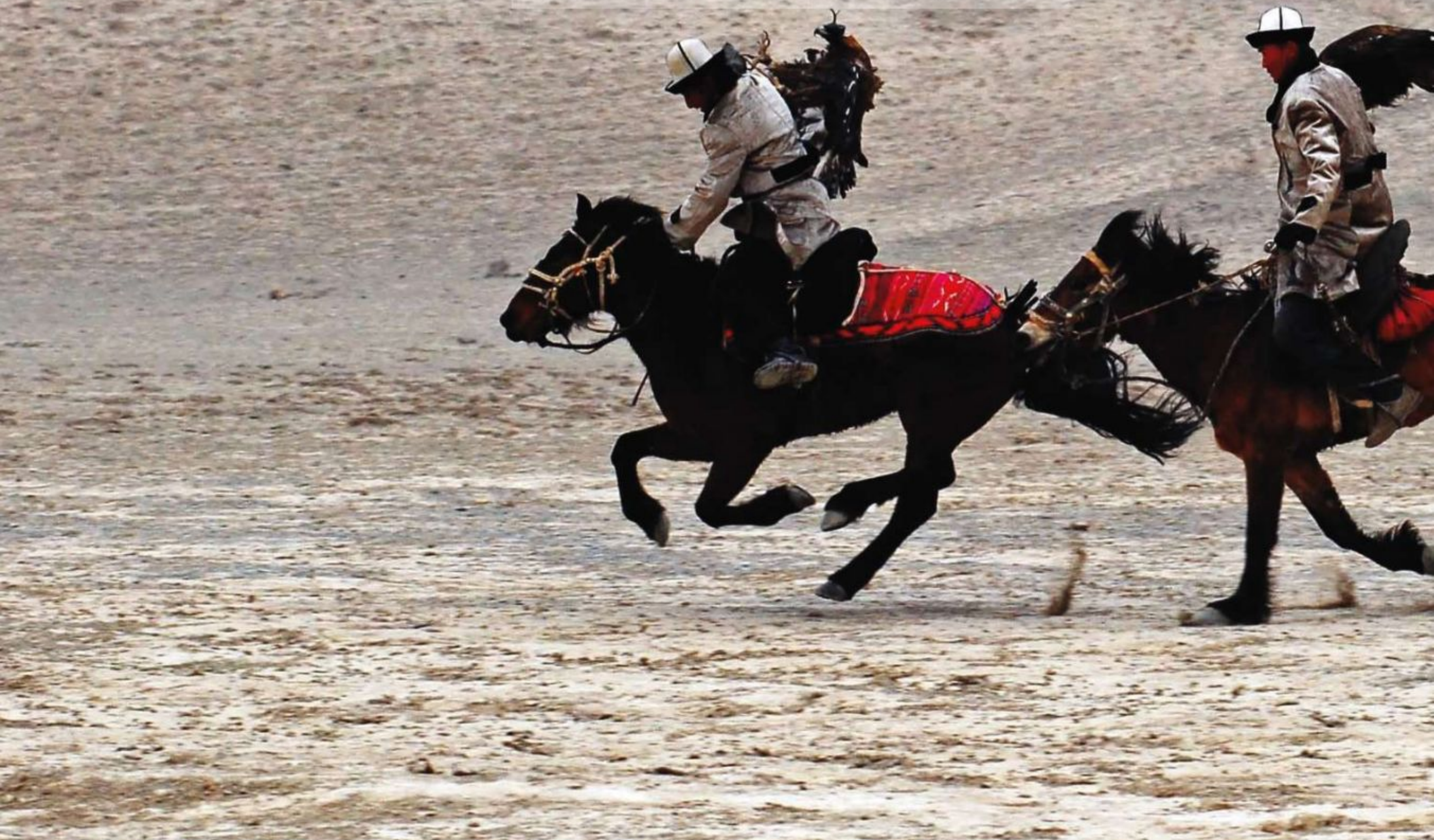
Qi Gang (middle), dressed in women's wear, answers the curtain call with his models.

HORSEBACK FALCONS

Text and photographs by He Yihong

With falcons on their shoulders, a cavalry of Kyrgyz hunters patrols the bushes and rocks of the dry, desolate desert. A gray rabbit scampers across the ground, almost invisible with his camouflaging fur matching the soil. Still, the sharp hunters' eyes don't miss the quick movement. The captain gestures to the rest of the squad, and they quickly surround the prey. Sensing the impending danger, the rabbit hops up, attempting a last-second escape. At the same moment, though, the hunters urge their horses on, kicking up a cloud of dust from the dry ground. The falcons dive towards the fleeing rabbit and one quickly seizes the animal with its powerful claws.

In Akqi, a small border county hidden deep in western China's Tianshan Mountains, the tradition of falconry lives on after being handed down across the generations.



It is difficult to train falcons.

A Family of Falconers

When I visited the county in early 2010, the winter hunting season was already near the end. Locals primarily hunt in winter because it is easier to track animals with footprints in the snow. Additionally, falcons shed some of their feathers in summer, which slows them down. I stayed in the home of Makaner Bieke in Yalangqi Village, more than 10 kilometers away from the county seat of Akqi. His seven brothers also call the village home.

In years past, the Kyrgyz led nomadic lives. Their skill to train falcons has been handed down from generation to generation within the ethnic group. On horseback, their ancestors scaled snow-capped Kokshal and Karateki Mountains to set their falcons free after their appreciated service concluded. With the help of the birds and hounds, they hunted wild animals such as rabbits, pheasants and foxes. In recent years, locals have begun to settle down and find careers outside of hunting. For instance, several of the Bieke brothers have full-time jobs in the county seat: Rouzhahong Bieke once acted as the director and organizing secretary of the county's Defense Department, Aishan Bieke is the vice president of Akqi People's Hospital, and Kanjiahong Bieke is a driver for the county's Tourism Bureau. Still, falconry remains an indispensible custom in many local households.

According to Makaner Bieke, there are 60 species of falcons, of which 40 can hunt wild animals alone to feed themselves. Seasoned hunters can distinguish the species according to details: Some have slight wrinkles on their claws, beaks and wings; some feature dark blue claws, while others are yellow; some have feathers like white poplar leaves, while others resemble willows. Also, falcons vary in shape. The county's Halabulak Township is home to a raptor with broad, strong wings, which locals call "Keranbozi." A species of hawk in Kaxgar's Akto County has a hole on its claws which is wide enough for a chopstick to go through. It is hard to distinguish female hawks from males by their appearances only. An old Kyrgyz falconer told me that females are usually a little larger. Typically, a falcon can live for 40-60 years. The age of a falcon can be estimated by the color of its feathers. Adults' feathers are all black, while younger birds have some white under their wings.

In recent years, China enacted a series of hunting restrictions to keep the ecological balance in pastoral areas. Falconers must register at local forestry department and acquire a training permit before teaching their hawks.

The Catch

Typically, wild falcons nest in mountains or valley shrubs around Akqi. The Kyrgyz classify three different methods for catching them. The first is to find baby falcons in their nests, but most falconers don't like to remove infants. The second method employs a trap: Falconers put a rabbit in an iron trap and tie a trained falcon so that the rabbit is just beyond its reach. When a bird hovering in the sky above sees the situation, it tends to dive to catch the bait. The third way is similar: Falconers set up a green net in the desert and again use a rabbit as bait. One person holds a rope tied to the rabbit's leg. When he moves the rope, the rabbit will jump, attracting falcons in the sky. The birds can only see black and white, so the green becomes invisible. When they swoop down for the bait, they can be caught alive.

Makaner Bieke caught his falcon using the second method. According to him, if a falcon is caught with the first method, its falconer will usually develop too deep an affection during the training process, so that setting the bird free becomes too sorrowful. Additionally, human-raised falcons are usually more timid and less aggressive. So, most Kyrgyz prefer to catch adult hawks in the wild and then train them into hunting partners.

The best time to catch falcons is September, when they are fattest and slowest. It is difficult to train wild falcons between the ages of 8 and 10. It often takes more than a year to train such a falcon. In February 2009, Makaner caught a wild hawk and tried to train it. However, it flew away nine months later. He plans to catch another this winter.

According to China's animal protection regulations,

Falcons are the Kyrgyz's best friends.

A hunter in tune with his falcon.

Falconry is a tradition handed down from generation to generation amongst Kyrgyz people.

falconers must register captured wild hawks and set them free within three years under the supervision of forest public security departments. It is ideal to return trained falcons to the wild in April to May, when their preferred prey is fattest.

The Hunt

Before going out, Kyrgyz hunters usually dress themselves carefully. They wear caps made of fox fur and yellowish camel wool coats tied with a leather belt. Their horses also wear colorful clothes, decorated with embroideries by local housewives. The front of the saddle features a perch for a falcon. The device appears like a short crutch, with one end fixed on the saddle and the other placed on a falconer's arm to reduce the pressure while riding.

Along with five falcons, I joined seven hunters in riding to a rocky shoal. A sandstorm darkened the sky, turning the landscape even more desolate. The hooves of the horses clapped on the stones and gravel, drawing me back to the remote past.

A Kyrgyz family.

Our horses crossed the Toxkan River one by one. Although winter is the dry season, the horses still got wet bellies when they crossed. My horse seemed uneasy about traversing the torrential water. I felt dizzy watching the water roaring by and fixed my eyes on the opposite bank to keep calm. I adjusted the reins to turn my horse upstream, preventing him from being swept away.

As we galloped into a deep, desolate valley, the captain gestured us to stop when he spotted a fox on the cliff. Hiding among rocks of the same color, the fox was almost undetectable to an inexperienced hunter. The cliff was so steep that we couldn't climb onto it. So, we rounded the mountain and found a comparatively gentle slope. After fastening his horse to a tree, a man from our group began to climb the mountain by foot with a falcon on his arm. When he reached the cliff, the fox had already disappeared.

Then, we continued to search for prey in the valley. As we scanned the shrubs in an extended formation, our horses clopped gently on the wet cobblestones. Suddenly, a hunter in the rear shouted when he spotted a partridge in a bush. The rest of us quickly turned and galloped toward the prey. A falcon swooped down and expertly snagged the partridge.

The locals went out to hunt with their falcons three times during my five-day stay in Yalangqi Village. "Do you often go hunting?" I asked some villagers. "No, not much," they replied. "There are fewer wild animals due to the constant deterioration of ecological environment. Besides, we spend most time working the crop fields, leaving little time to hunt. Hunting is actually a pastime." In the village, hunting trips are also organized to celebrate weddings or commemorate the anniversary of the death of a family member. I hope the locals can maintain their tradition, so the rest of us can still have the chance to witness horseback hunters flying their falcons over the vast land of Central Asia.

Kyrgyz people still preserve traditional lifestyles.

GRANDPA PANDA

Text by Ai Youdi
Photographs by Shepherd C. Zhou

Some of the over 100 "giant pandas" rest, stand, or eat bamboo, while others play, seem to laugh, or sleep. This is not a zoo, but the home of Liang Guanjun in Wuhan City. First-time visitors often mistake it for a giant panda center.

A Bold Undertaking

The now 93-year-old Liang retired in 1982. With a comfortable pension, he could afford a life of ease and leisure, yet he remains quite handy. In the 1980s, he was keen on making figurines. In the 1990s, he spent a lot of time researching three-wheeled electric automobiles. Often, retirement defines the man, and this one still keeps busy, avoiding simple comforts. He is always thinking of what to do next.

Not far from Liang's home is a stationery shop. The window facing the street is loaded with Mickey Mouse, Hello Kitty, and China's Pleasant Goat toys. Every time Liang saw kids hugging the plush toys and taking them home, his mind would turn to giant pandas – his childhood favorite. He decided to begin making panda toys, in hopes of making this national treasure popular with kids.

Passionate about the idea, Liang started right away. He found many picture albums of giant pandas and bought plush cloth, stuffing, and other materials for making toys. The body of the giant panda was quite simple. It did not take very long before Liang could successfully construct it. Difficulty came with head and facial features. In order to make the toy realistic, Liang visited the local zoo many times and downloaded panda images and video from internet. Using a mould made of silica gel, he tried numerous times. After patiently working for a year, Liang finally finished his first successful panda, which was remarkably true to life.

After creating his first toy, he expertly began sample research and development. For a long time, Liang spent his time in Wuhan's streets, searching for suitable stuffing and shell fabric. "Stuffing should be soft and odorless," he remarks. "Seams should be secure, and the stuffing shouldn't be revealed. The panda's eyes, nose, and mouth should be stitched tightly and without sharp edges." He is especially talkative when it comes to his giant pandas.

Liang and his pandas.

Stitching the panda's ear.

Starting a Business

Through his painstaking work, Liang's toys became more and more lifelike. In order to transform his personal hobby into a business, he registered for a business license and applied for panda emulational products design patent. He opened a giant panda club, and began to produce toys in various sizes. "I thought of opening a shop on the street," he recalls. "Then I could personally construct toys in the shop, which would not only attract customers, but also allow me to sell products immediately after they were made. But that would all require a large investment." Finally, he settled on turning his three-bedroom apartment into a family workshop.

After all, Liang is in his nineties and it takes him two to three days to craft a single toy, and an entire week for the more difficult ones. Soon, he considered recruiting apprentices. Chen Xiaojuan, having previously worked in Guangdong Province, became Liang's first protégé. With Chen onboard, Liang could stick to designing while his partner more ably performed the remaining work under his instruction.

Since Liang's family workshop opened, business has been quite good. Recently, Liang brought 170 giant panda toys of different sizes and in various postures to the Wuhan Zoo for exhibition. "Guess what?" he asks. "We almost sold all of our pandas. A medium-size panda sells for 200 yuan." His excitement when thinking of the zoo is unmistakable.

Kids in panda costumes.

Building a Brand

Liang soon began to expand his business. Stuffed toys are a bit dull and comparatively expensive. Liang and Chen developed 13 series of panda products, from prints, badges, automobile accessories, and electric toys, to cartoon panda accessories, diversifying their business's offerings.

However, since all the products were hand-made, Liang and his student could still only produce one stuffed panda a day. So, Liang contacted some local artists and designers to form the Giant Panda Handiwork League, hoping that some components of his products could be mass produced to lower costs.

From sketch to reality.

In his bedroom, now also serving as his studio, he assembles a panda's eyes. "You see? Ping pong ball eyes are very vivid," he notes. "If I could have them cut with a machine, it would save both time and money." Additionally, Liang wants to recruit laid-off female workers. He is willing to train them for free. "On one hand, my workshop needs more hands. On the other, it is more difficult for laid-off female workers to find a new employment, compared with their male counterparts. Learning this sort of work is ideal for them to start their own business."

Now, Liang's stuffed panda toys have reached a fifth generation. "They can stand, sit, or lie on their bellies," he smiles. "You can even make them wave to you. I hope to one day host a giant panda toy exhibition."

RESTORED GLORY

Text by Wang Fang
Photographs by Wang Lei

> Historically, Datong witnessed the amalgamation of nomadic and farming civilizations along with the cultural fusion of Han and northern ethnic minorities. In contemporary times, however, lack of a diversified economy has, to some extent, restricted the city's growth. Using the concept of "building a new urban district while conserving the old," we have aroused Datong city's rejuvenation, which is presently underway.
>
> — Ji Mingde, Vice Mayor of Datong

Liu Jinchuan is already at the southern old city wall before the sun comes up to warm the northern city of Datong. He will spend the entire morning photographing the scene around him, determined to capture every change of the city on film. He has strictly followed this routine since a maintenance and restoration project for the ancient city wall began two years ago.

In his images, the formerly damaged eastern city wall now appears similar to how it looked soon after being reconstructed by Ming Dynasty General Xu Da in 1372. It was no small task then or now, but the restoration included all of the wall's 12 watchtowers, two command platforms, two turrets, an arrow tower, and a crescent-shaped defense base, together totaling 1,800 meters in length. The project marked the largest of its kind since Xu Da last attempted it in the 14th century, and it is just one component of Datong's plan to preserve all of its ancient urban districts.

Yungang Grottoes in Datong, Shanxi, represent outstanding Chinese Buddhist grotto art of the period from the 5th to 6th century.

Decision

Datong was established in 398, and for its first millennium, the city was one of the most important in northern China. Constantly evolving planned urban construction resulted in an organized street layout, which remains mostly intact today. Across the ages, there was no shift in the city's geographical core, and its northern and southern axes remain the same as they were centuries ago, a rarity amongst surviving ancient Chinese cities. According to the Datong Municipal Administration of Cultural Relics, the city features 1,519 traditional houses, characterized by courtyard residences found along its 156 well-preserved ancient streets, and the earthen foundation of the historical city walls built between dynasties ranging from the Northern Wei (386-534) to the Qing (1644-1911) is remarkably preserved although many brick sections of the wall and towers no longer stand.

An understanding of the city's relatively great conditions fueled Mayor Geng Yanbo's decision to restore the original appearance of the ancient city.

In 2008, the municipal government ordered the commencement of the reconstruction project, which abruptly ended over 60 modern real estate development projects which were underway within the old district. The project covers 3.28 square kilometers of land, with primary focus on buildings erected after the Liao (916-1125) such as Huayan Temple, Shanhua Temple, and the Mansion of Prince Dai. As the modern buildings are torn down one by one, the old city will regain its genuine historic look with traditional buildings lining crisscrossing streets enclosed by city walls on four sides.

Mode

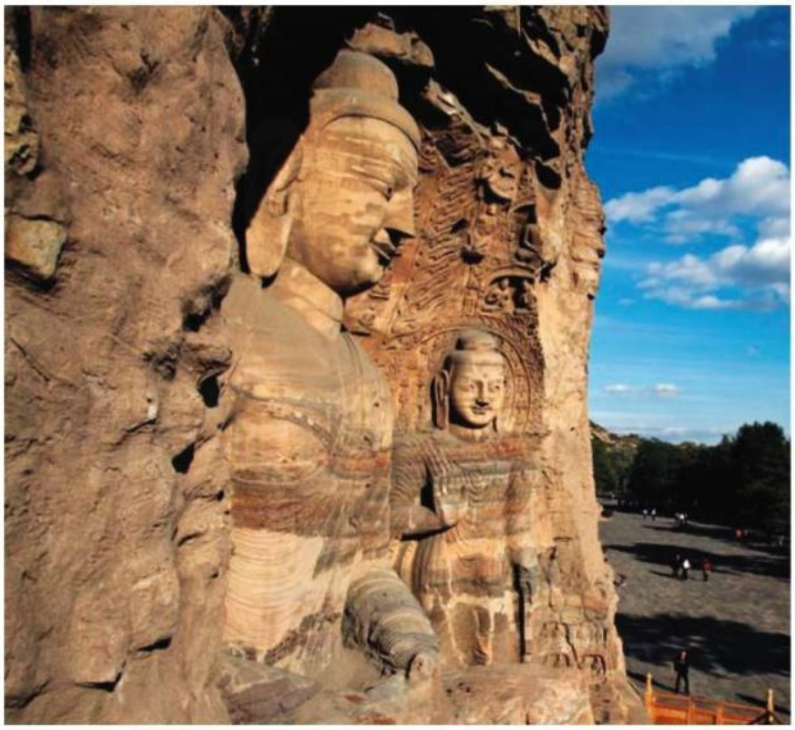
According to the mayor's plan, by 2020 the city will develop a modern face while conserving its historical sites. In a decade, Datong will consist of three sections: an industrial zone west of the Shili River, a new district east of the Yuhe River, and the restored old city resting between the two rivers at the heart of the city.

Actually, Mayor Geng is not the first to have the idea of separating new and ancient districts. As early as 50 years ago, several scholars led by prominent architect Liang Sicheng presented the concept of establishing an administrative hub outside of Beijing's old districts, to preserve the traditional aura of the ancient capital. However, the idea was ultimately defeated, and municipal authorities of that era opted to give a modern face to the old districts.

In terms of present-day urban designs with historical districts separate from modern areas, Xi'an and Suzhou provide examples worthy of emulating. Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province, launched a project to rejuvenate the Tang Dynasty's imperial city based on old urban districts through a series of measures aiming to reduce population and architectural density. Meanwhile, eight industrial development zones were constructed outside of the old dis-

A statue in the Yungang Grottoes represents a classical image of people from the Western Regions.

Datong's municipal project for restoring the old city wall is underway, with certain sections already completed.



Cave 20 of the Yungang Grottoes is famous for a sitting statue of Sakyamuni, carved from 460 to 465 during the Northern Wei Dynasty.

Shanxi is home to a plethora of cultural relics, and the superb craftsmanship of Buddhist images preserved in the ancient city of Datong stuns most visitors. This Liao Dynasty (916-1125) sculpture, housed in Huayan Temple, has been repaired several times.

tricts. According to its current plan, the municipal government of Xi'an will relocate from its current location within the ancient city walls to a new seat in the suburbs within a few years.

The old urban area of Suzhou, in Jiangsu Province, covers a sprawling 14.2 square kilometers without a single high-rise. More than 160 factories were moved out of the area, and an ancient canal network was restored after significant deterioration over the centuries. To the east and west of the old city are Suzhou Industrial Park and a hi-tech zone, respectively, and to the north and south are new urban districts – a design that provides space for the city's growth without danger of encroaching on the ancient land.

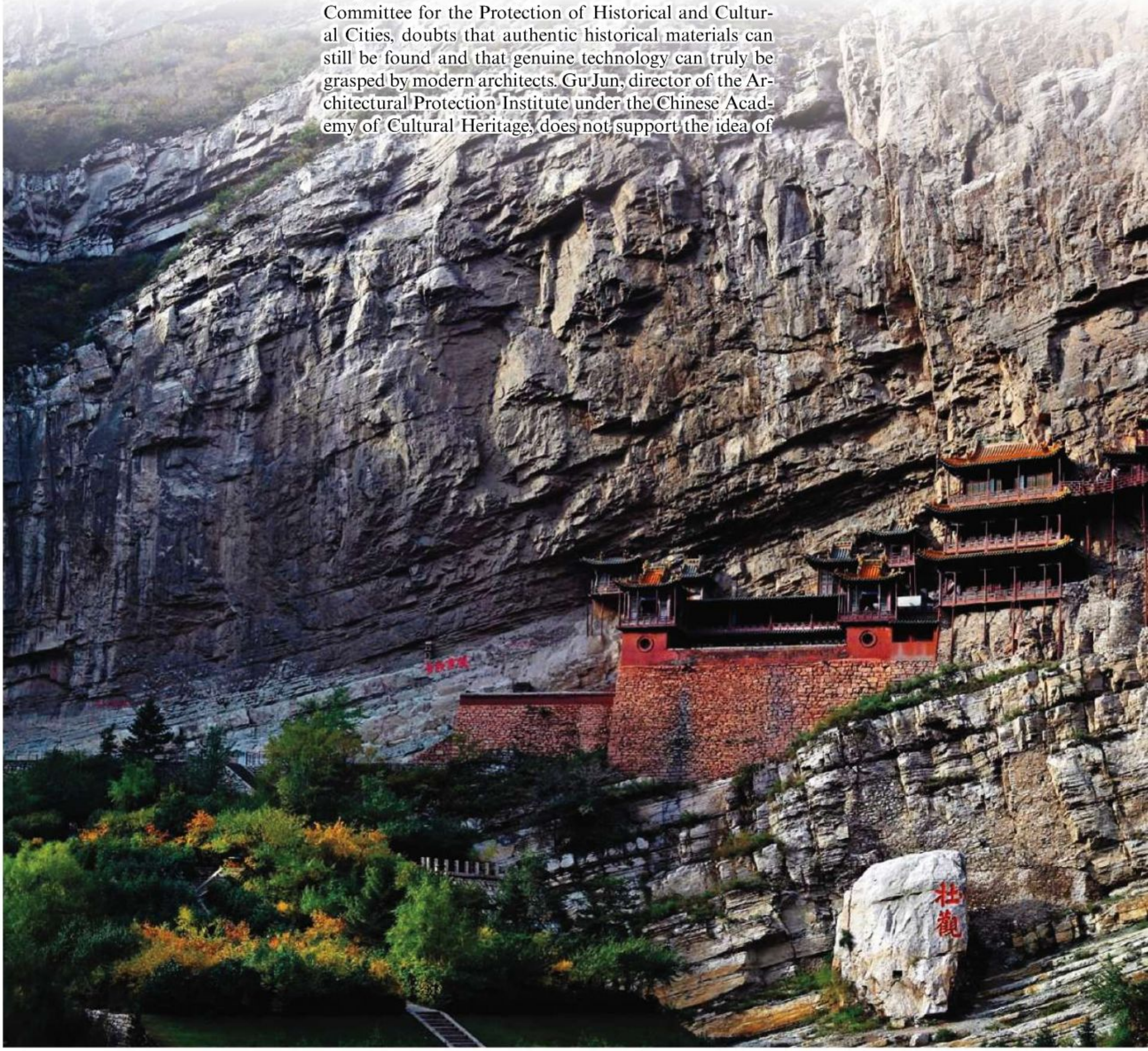
At a Buddhist hall of Huayan Temple, tourists can gaze at a large-format mural created by the Central Academy of Fine Arts, the most prestigious art institute in China. With many of its historical halls restored, Huayan Temple is larger than it has been for centuries.

Huayan Temple Square, imbued with an ancient flavor.

Praise and Doubt

In performing maintenance and remodeling of its old urban area, Datong restores the original look by using original materials and technology and adopting original designs. After years of meticulous work following this principle, Huayan Temple, which was formerly left with only the Hall of the Great Hero, is now a majestic architectural complex. Noted writer Feng Jicai praised Datong's efforts saying, "I even noticed authentic glue holding the temple's stone and wood together. The castle-style brick theatre testifies to the workers' superb techniques."

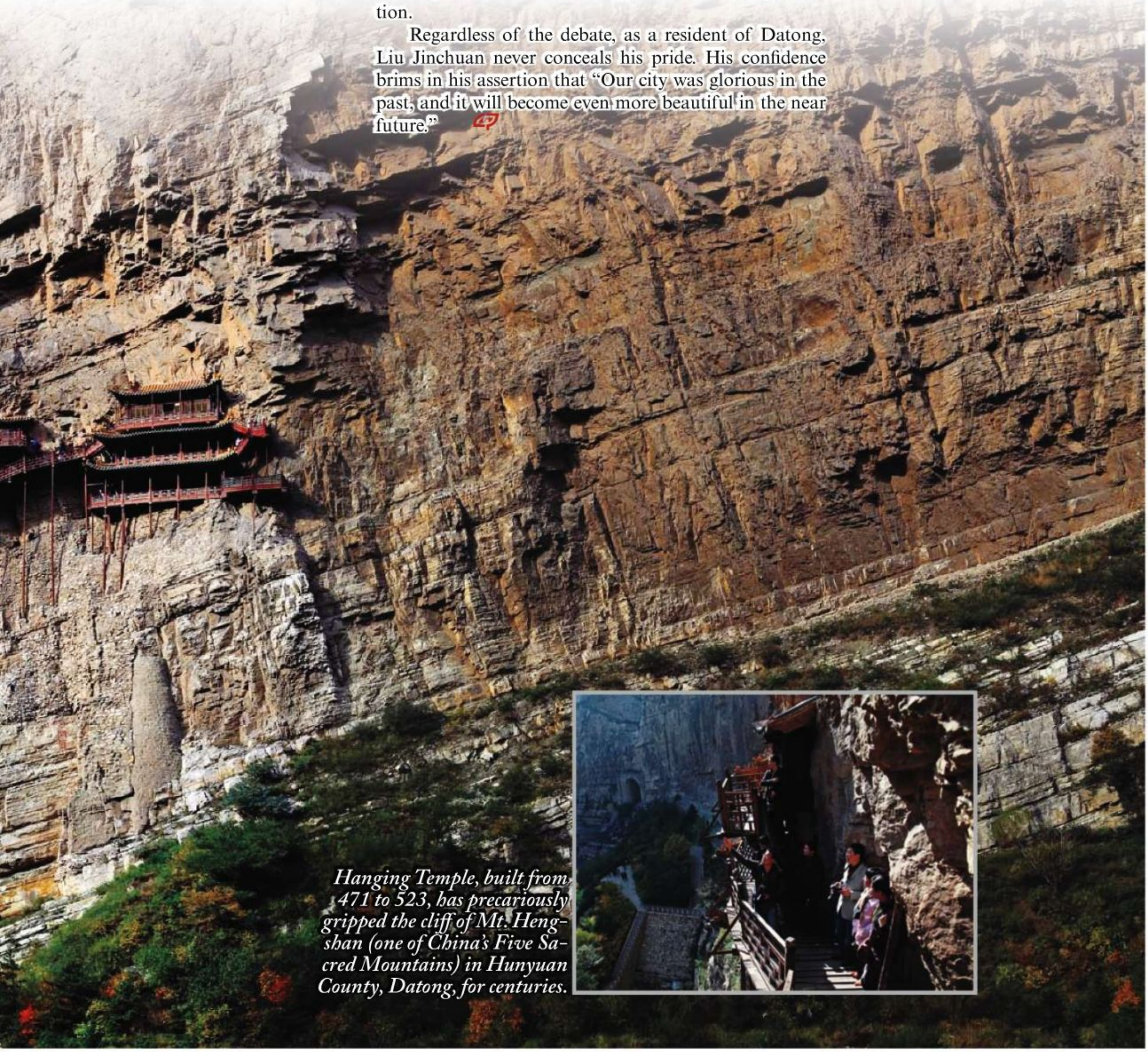
However, others look at the project from a different perspective. Ruan Yisan, member of the China Expert Committee for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Cities, doubts that authentic historical materials can still be found and that genuine technology can truly be grasped by modern architects. Gu Jun, director of the Architectural Protection Institute under the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, does not support the idea of



restoration. "We aim to preserve remains rather than reconstruct them," he illustrates. "It is nearly impossible to restore ancient buildings to their original looks since few historical blueprints are available."

Responding to concerns, Datong explained that unlike European classical architecture, ancient Chinese buildings are mostly composed of brick and wood, often leading to complete destruction if even minor roof damage is not repaired in a timely fashion. Therefore, they believe that renovation is absolutely necessary. According to Mayor Geng, if not for the large scale renovation during the Qing Dynasty, Yueyang Tower in Hunan Province would lack the imposing look it has today, and the millennium-old cultural evidence embodied in the historical building would not have been passed on to our generation.

Regardless of the debate, as a resident of Datong, Liu Jinchuan never conceals his pride. His confidence brims in his assertion that "Our city was glorious in the past, and it will become even more beautiful in the near future."



Hanging Temple, built from 471 to 523, has precariously gripped the cliff of Mt. Hengshan (one of China's Five Sacred Mountains) in Hunyuan County, Datong, for centuries.

Purring Hogs

Text by Tan Xingyu
Photographs by Chen Jian

In 1968, Robert M. Pirsig and his son, Chris, left the Minnesota Twin Cities to embark on a cross-country motorcycle trip, full of curiosity to explore the wild fields covering the west. Their excursion was later documented in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, a book that quickly attracted a strong legion of fans. In 2006, the bestseller's Chinese version was released by Chongqing Publishing House, and the book soon earned extended readership in China. When questioned as to his motivation for releasing the book, the publisher claimed that it marked an important cultural step in building Chongqing into China's motorcycle capital.

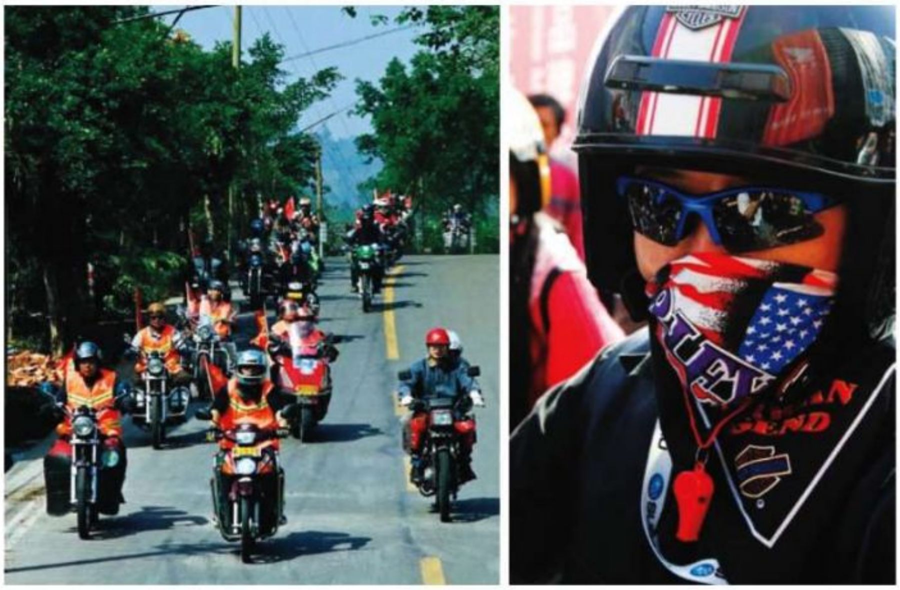
China International Motorcycle Trade Exhibition became a carnival for motorbike fans.

Last August, *Foreign Policy* magazine released its 2010 Global Cities Index, dubbing Chongqing "Chicago on the Yangtze," and recommending it as the "biggest city you've never heard of." Home to western China's largest volume of automobile production and the country's biggest motorcycle production base, the mountain city is sated with biking silhouettes. Since 2002, Chongqing has annually hosted the China International Motorcycle Trade Exhibition, the largest of its kind in China.

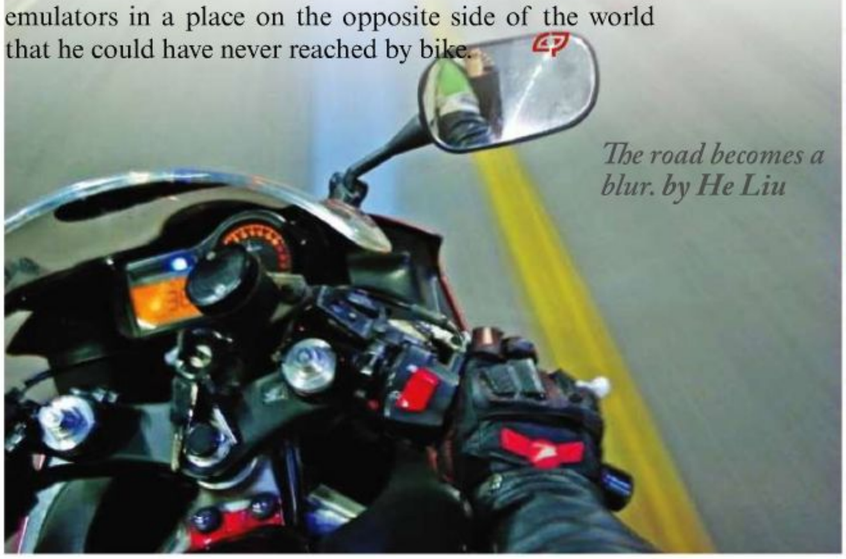
The Ninth China International Motorcycle Trade Exhibition was recently presented at a venue covering over 60,000 square meters, larger than all previous events. In addition to dazzling new models, organizers also provided a merchant platform for manufacturers of name-brand motorcycles and auto parts. For the first time ever, the event even attracted producers of motorcycle-related cultural items who came seeking new business opportunities. Meanwhile, nearly 500 foreign dealers visited the exhibition with purchase orders in hand. During a summit forum running alongside the exhibition, domestic and foreign officials, experts, and entrepreneurs spoke and shared experiences and concerns about the industry.

Unlike previous installments, this year's cultural activities, such as "Motorcycle Capital, Happy Chongqing," a motorcycle riding activity especially designed for fans of Chinese high-end, fuel-hungry heavy cycles, delighted visitors. Motorcycle enthusiasts came from around the country to share their passion for the vehicles, creating an event not unlike a national motorcycle carnival.

Organizers enabled participants to bike through downtown Chongqing before heading to a hot-spring suburban district 50 kilometers away. When a fleet of Harley-Davidson and BMW bikes purred through the city proper on October 21, the occassion drew considerable attention, and the combined engines created a sound resembling the vibrant heartbeat of the city. Then, the tour down the country road brought riders even more excitement. Galloping through the bright sunshine, with wind shooting through their hair, the cyclists became intoxicated by the area's idyllic ambience. Whether or not they're fans of Pirsig, the pioneer certainly has numerous emulators in a place on the opposite side of the world that he could have never reached by bike.

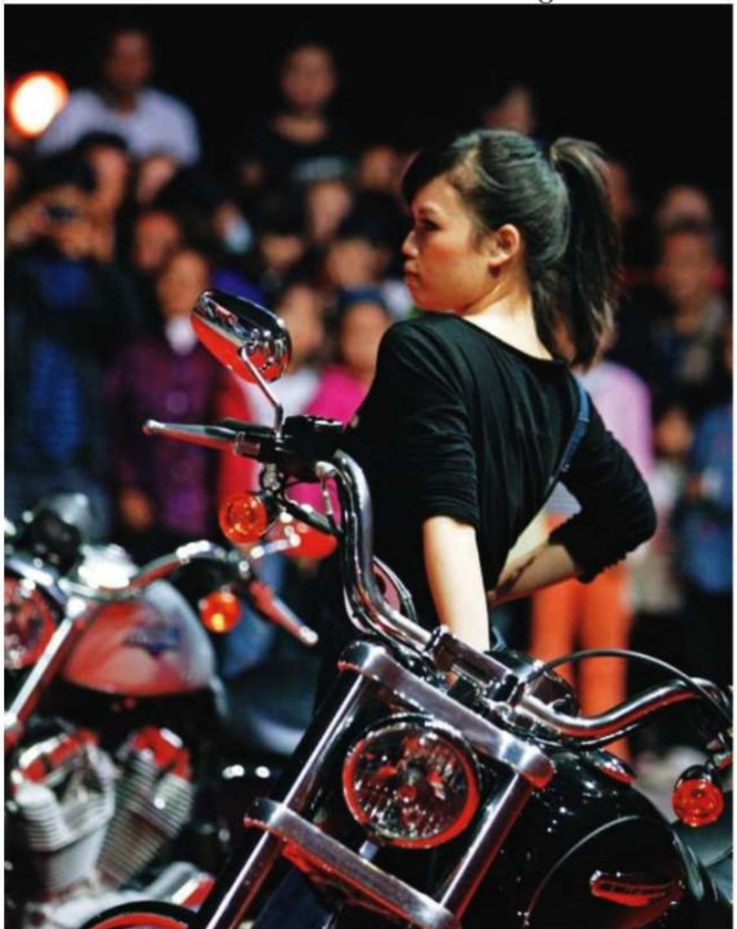


Stylish bikes and riders.



The road becomes a blur. by He Liu

An alluring model drew as much attention as the cycle during the exhibition.



Rekindling an Ancient Kiln

Text and photographs by Zhong Peiming

A kiln worker keeps a close watch on the burning kiln even at midnight.

A re-launch ceremony for an ancient dragon kiln (a massive dragon-shaped pottery oven) was held on November 1, 2010, in Baoxi Township, Longquan County, in southeastern China's Zhejiang Province. At 10 p.m., pottery master Ding Shaojie shouted, "Start the fire!" Then, kiln workers lit a "dragon head," marking the rebirth of the ancient kiln after a dozen years of rest.

The county of Longquan is considered the birthplace of Chinese celadon porcelain. Burned with less flame, celadon porcelain features blue glaze from iron oxide pigment, and is particularly noted for refined texture in simple but elegant shapes and pure but diverse colors. Some praise it "as blue as jadeite, as smooth as a mirror, and able to ring like stone chimes when tapped."

First built in the early 20th century, the kiln measures 30 meters in length and consists of 26 burning chambers. Before the ceremony, Baoxi Township and Xitou Village repaired the kiln's interior stairs and walls and restored its original potting workshop. More than 10 metric tons of firewood were prepared for the re-launch. Along with Ding, six other ceramic masters joined the kilning team, who burned 458 pieces in the kiln with the help of 42 local potters.

A celadon bottle featuring smooth glaze, tender texture and elegant shape attracts the eyes of all who glance at it.

According to Ding, making porcelain in a traditional dragon kiln involves three major steps: loading, burning, and unloading. Loading the kiln may seem simple, but it actually requires exquisite skills. This is because different zones inside vary in terms of temperature and airflow, and unburned ware must be placed appropriately to ensure the quality of finished products. So, more seasoned workers usually load the kiln.

On the re-opening night, dozens of workers joined in a short but solemn ceremony to worship the kiln god and pray for good luck before sealing the kiln with bricks and lighting the fire.

"Burning includes five phases, and the fire gets more intense with every phase," Ding explained. "The warm-up period lasts for 15-20 hours. When the temperature of the kiln reaches 1,300 degrees Celsius and the stoves spout glaringly white flame, it is time to begin burning clay items." Ding has been working with local dragon kilns since he was 17 years old. He was confident about the successful re-launch of the dragon kiln because both the local government and potters invested painstaking efforts.

At 10:30 a.m. on November 4, the most exciting moment arrived, when the kiln was unsealed after 15 hours of burning and 24 hours of cooling. Actually, the unsealing step is as crucial as the fire-setting. Together with potters and other kiln workers, Ding carefully removed the bricks sealing the kiln. Thirty minutes later, when kiln workers carried sealed containers full of finished products from the kiln, those waiting outside approached to have a closer look. When a potter opened a container, he revealed a beautiful celadon bottle with a smooth glaze and tender texture, generating thunderous applause from bystanders. The finished bottle testified to the kiln's rational structure and stable environment as well as to the skill of the experienced potters. Undoubtedly, it was a successful re-launch. "Our dream finally came true," some potters exclaimed, with clear excitement. "Today, we relived the past."

Historically, Baoxi had 12 dragon kilns, most of which were built during the Republic of China period (1912-1949), but several can be traced back to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). In the past, the kilns mainly produced household porcelain utensils. In the last decade, with the popularization of gas-fueled kilns, most traditional dragon kilns were shut down. Fortunately, the traditional firing technology of Longquan celadon has been included on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. With support from the local government, nine dragon kilns have been restored. In the near future, more retired dragon kilns such as Chenjia and Jinpin will restart production, ensuring a modern renaissance of millennium-old celadon firing technology.

The temperature of the flames determined whether the kiln's re-launch would be successful or not.

Traditionally, kiln workers worship the kiln god to pray for good luck before burning porcelain.

Liao Xiaolin (left), a local celadon porcelain artist, talks with his colleague about a newly-finished porcelain piece.

A Rising Commercial Hub

Text and photographs by Li Jinglu

Tailors at work.

Although not widely known, Baigou (White Gully), hiding 100 kilometers south of Beijing, was historically an important water transport channel in North China. Nourished by the river for nearly 2,000 years, Baigou Town was once a bustling dock serving dozens of commercial boats every day. Today, although the shipping industry has drifted into history, the place retains its advantageous geographical location. It sits 100 kilometers from Beijing, Tianjin, and Baoding, three major northern Chinese cities, so four expressways and five railways crisscross through the town. Thanks to its prime position, Baigou has developed into an important small commodity wholesale hub of the North.

Start-Up

On an autumn day in 1971, Zhang Guoqing, a Baigou production team leader, and his associate, accountant Li Mingcai, came across a beautiful artificial leather bicycle seat cover, which inspired them to complete a "big deal" of the era. They traveled to Beijing's commercial district and bought leftover pieces of artificial leather to construct several seat covers. When the seats went on sale at a local shop, they sold like hotcakes. Soon, Zhang recruited a team to engage in leather goods production, which quickly earned considerable income.

In February 1979, when traditional fairs were resuming, the financially savvy residents of Baigou, like ducks finding water once again, competed in selling clay figu-

rines, toys, small commodities, bags, and luggage at a fair venue stretching from Shiqiaokeng to Guzhen Street, at which location today's specialized markets gradually formed. In 1992, encouraged by Deng Xiaoping's speech during his inspection tour of southern China, Baigou's markets began booming even more, once featuring some 30,000 merchants running 20,000 stands in eight specialized markets. A heated discussion of the "Baigou phenomenon" triggered an unprecedented investment and development frenzy in the town, further pushing locals down the path to prosperity.

Gao Yufen and her husband are amongst the numerous Baigou residents who have evolved from farmers to businesspeople. They started by selling schoolbags of any sought-after brand, but now have their own original brand and sell from their own shop. Since 1992, they have benefited from original designs as well as independent material selection and production of their brand, "Lisideman," which is now famous in markets, earning an annual turnover of 4 million yuan.

Today, with awareness that "brands mean fortunes," a growing number of Baigou residents are dedicating themselves to business modes based on independent creation. At present, of the more than 30,000 varieties in 33 categories of bags and suitcases sold at Baigou markets, some 1,000 are local brands, including over 10 nationally recognizable brands. Baigou has been dubbed the "Chinese Capital of Bags and Suitcases" and "The Center of China's Synthetic Leather Production and Sales."

Accelerated Growth

In 1993, after a period of exploration and practice, the local government developed a "Baigou mode." By building credit and integrity, providing quality and affordable commodities, and implementing a four-step development strategy from commercialization to industrialization, urbanization, and internationalization, the framework for Baigou's leapfrog development is being established.

Some of those who have already made fortunes in business are turning to investments in industrial fields, seeking more extensive development. Along with the formation of a diversified marketplace, farmers are finding greater channels for profitability, which in turn ensures sustainable development of the market. After three decades of continuous growth, Baigou's commodity quality has increased, business scope has been widened, and living conditions have improved by leaps and bounds. Economic growth is driving the development of the logistics industry which is resulting in an increase in private enterprises, in turn creating tens of thousands of new jobs. Through this process, Baigou has accelerated in building a new socialist countryside, with 95 percent of its permanent residents engaged in farming, 95 percent of its market runners involved in farming, 95 percent of its industrial investors formerly or presently farmers, and 95 percent of economic beneficiaries residing in rural areas. Additionally, nearly 1 million farmers in neighboring counties have also built fortunes, benefiting from the Baigou market. In Baigou, for a single family's assets to exceed 1 million yuan is not worthy of surprise.

In recent years, thanks to the local government's strategy of building a new image for the town, previously specialized markets have evolved into 10 modern shopping cities, respectively devoted to bags and suitcases, garments, footwear and caps, small commodities, hardware casing and leather, building materials and decorations, apparel and accessories, electronics, and auto parts. Boasting more than 150,000 varieties of commodities on shelves of 10,000 shops and 30,000 stands, which attract 300,000 customers daily, Baigou is poised to become the biggest commodity distribution hub in North China.

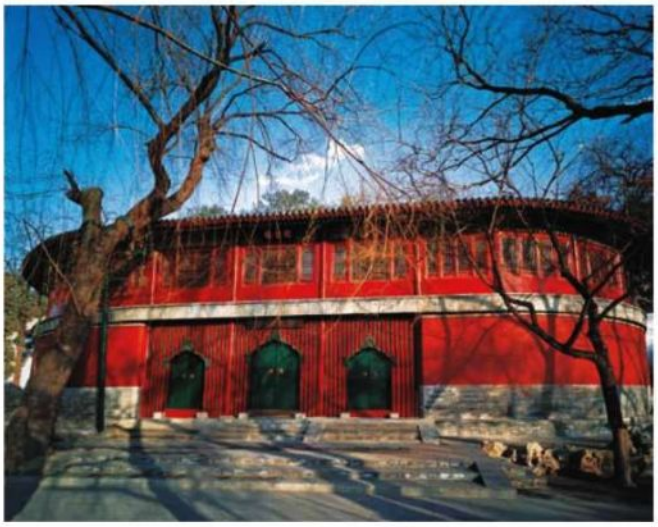
Baigou original brand handbags.

Baigou has been dubbed the "Chinese Capital of Bags and Luggage."

A store selling plush toys. by Xu Xun

Collecting Classical Chinese Calligraphy

Text by Zhao Li
Photographs by Li Jiang



Yuegu Tower.

In Beijing's Beihai Park, at the western foot of Qionghua Isle, stands a tower known as Yuegu, which means "study of ancient Chinese culture." Erected in 1753 during the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the two-story semicircular building houses 25 rooms. Stored there are stone rubbing masterpieces by some of the most distinguished calligraphers of ancient China, including Wang Xizhi, Wang Xianzhi, and Wang Xun.

History

The collection features rubbings on 495 stones, each measuring 95 centimeters long, 30 centimeters wide, and 10 centimeters thick. Deeply impressed by the work of master calligraphers, Emperor Qianlong wrote dozens of poems to express his admiration.

In 1839, during the reign of Emperor Daoguang, the Qing government launched a project to recarve the masterpieces and decorate their rims.

In 1964, Beihai Park's administration moved all of the carvings to the second floor to better protect and showcase the stones, which were separated by 14 walls each filled with carvings, totaling 275 pieces.

Protection

In 1966, during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), employees of the park closed the exhibition and detached the horizontal board over the tower gate to deter destruction of the relics.

In 1975, then Premier Zhou Enlai visited Beihai Park and borrowed five volumes of books documenting the rubbings. He strongly suggested taking measures to better preserve the books and asked that the horizontal board be replaced. Though seriously ill, Premier Zhou asked his wife to inform Wang Yequi, then director of the State Cultural Relics Bureau, to assess the situation to ensure protection of relics stored in the tower. Soon afterwards, the Bureau dispatched a group of specialists to inspect the building and carvings. From that point, extensive protective measures have been enacted to ensure preservation.

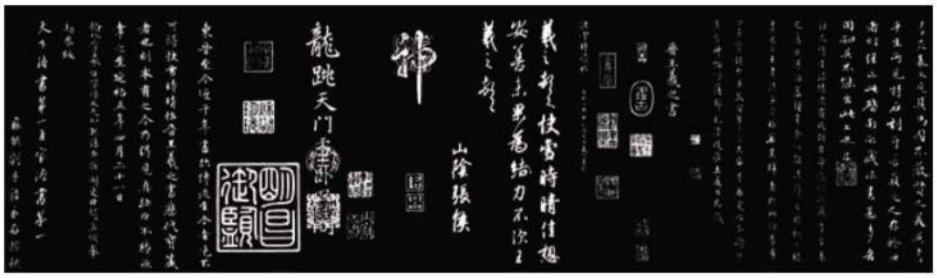
In 1988, park administration installed glass casings over all of the stone carvings.

Priceless Deposits

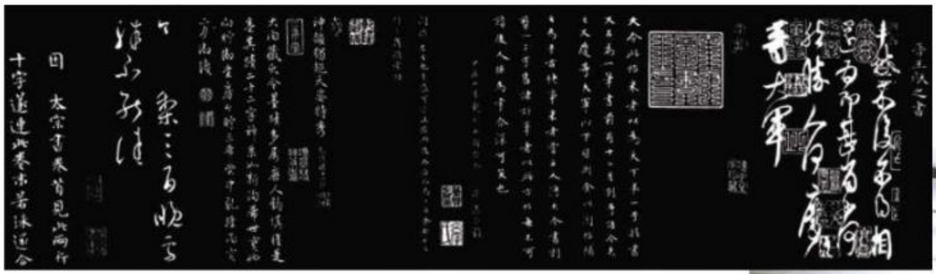
The majority of the carvings were sketched and carved meticulously from even more ancient original work once in the collection. Grand in scale and abundant in content, their value to the study of ancient Chinese calligraphy is understandably priceless.

The well-preserved carvings in Yuegu Tower include items that can be traced back as far as the Wei Dynasty (220-265). Arranged in chronological order, these works showcase the development of ancient Chinese calligraphy in terms of both writing style and literary evolution.

Along with its value for the understanding of ancient Chinese calligraphy, Yuegu Tower's collection also serves as an irreplaceable cultural treasure of the royal garden of Beihai Park.



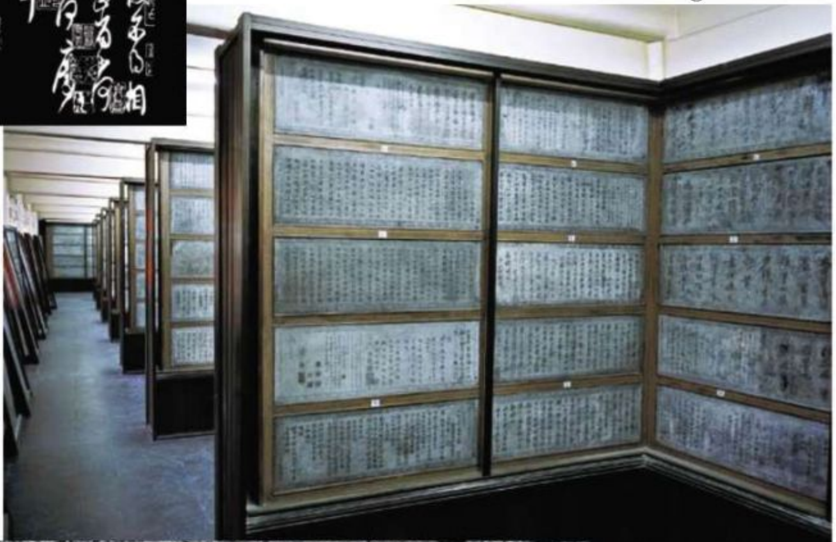
A masterpiece by Wang Xizhi (303-361).

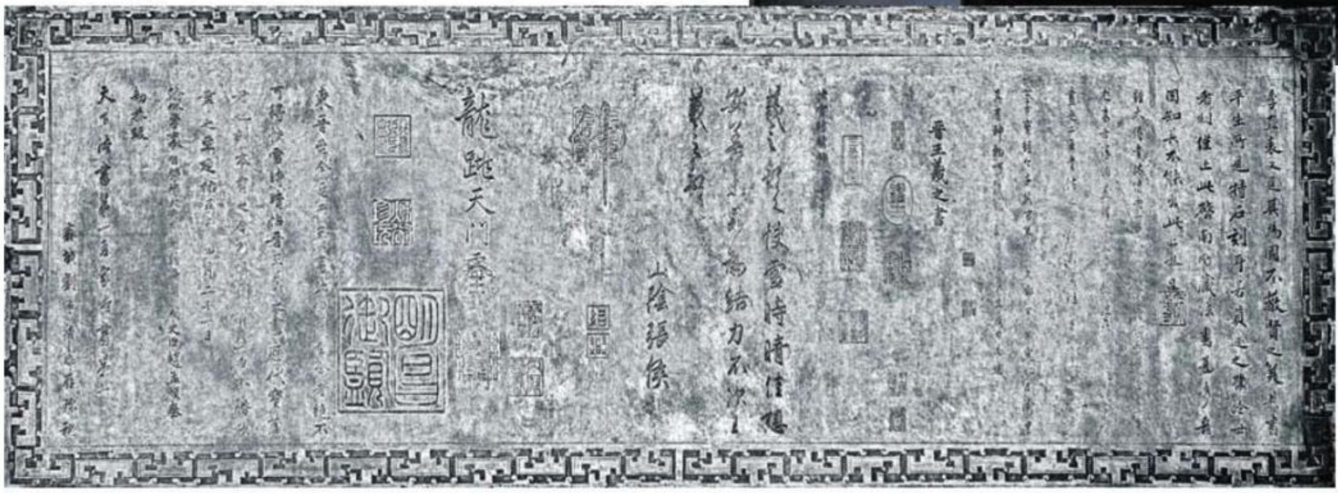


A masterpiece by Wang Xianzhi (344 -386).

An inscription by Emperor Gaozong of the Qing Dynasty.

Stone tablets in Yuegu Tower.





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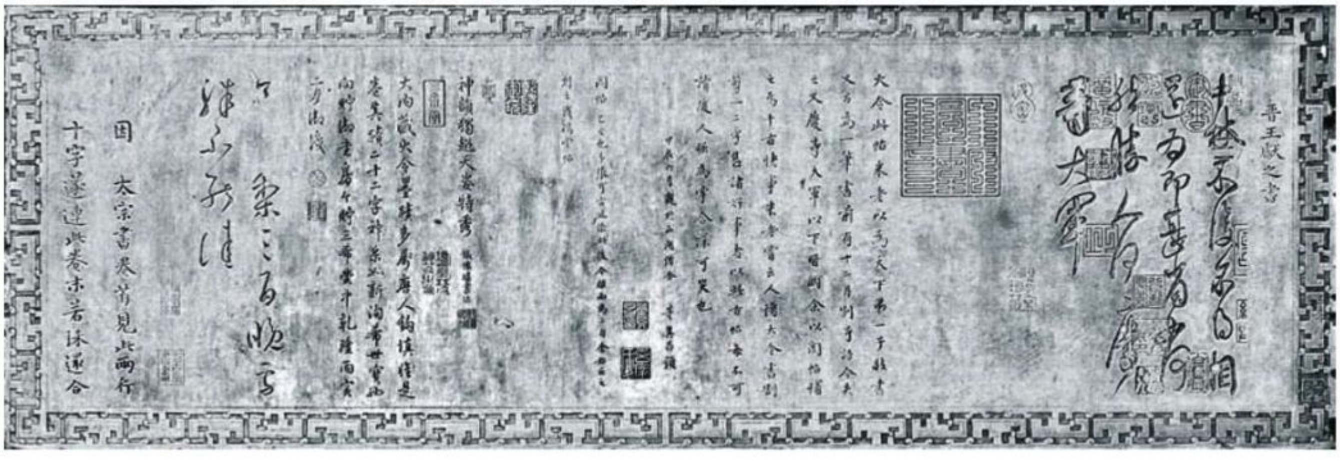


A masterpiece by Wang Xianzhi (344 -386).

Misty Mountains

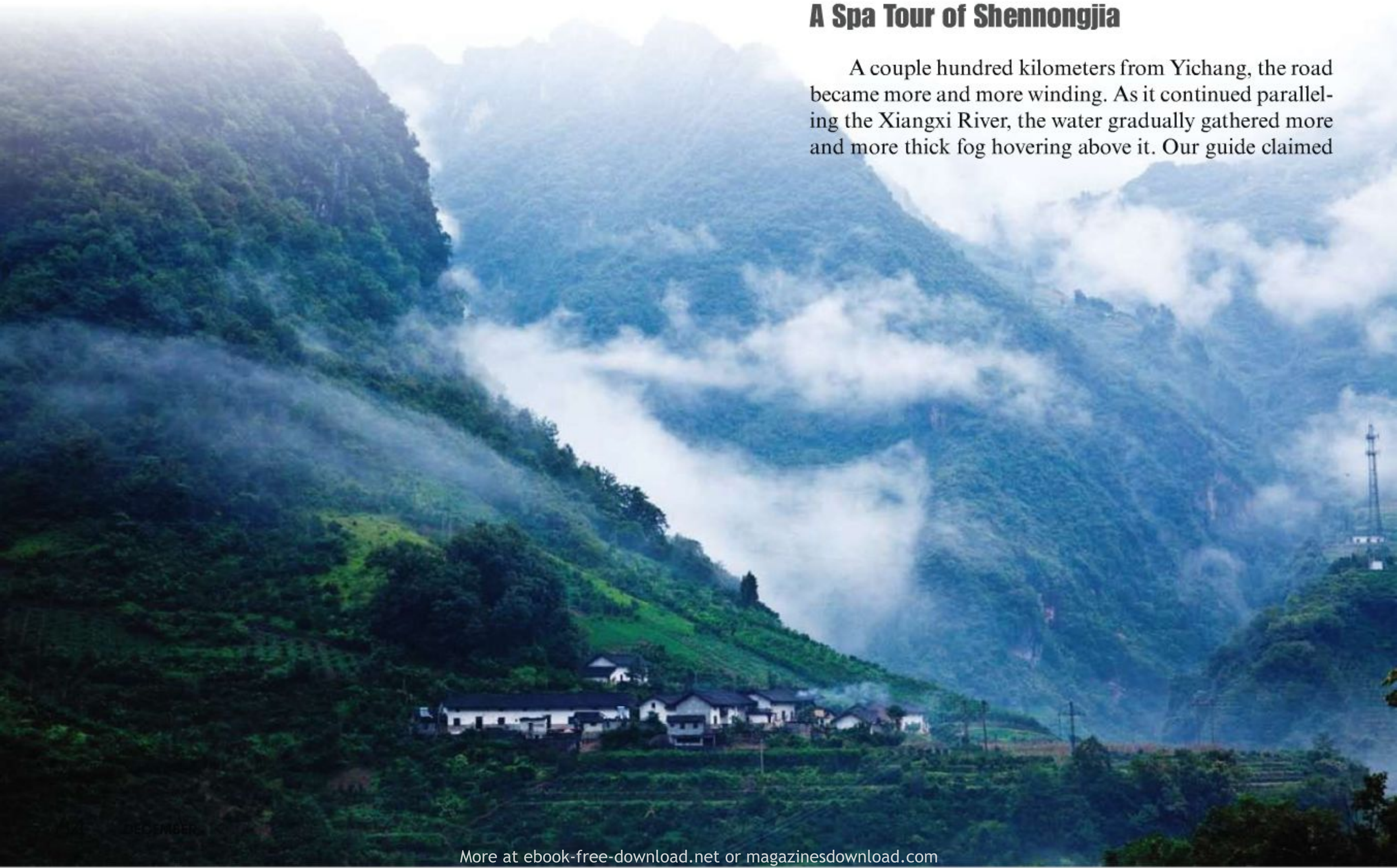
Text and photographs by Wang Lei

Wild flowers of Shennongjia.

In late autumn, Baishan Mountain gets draped in dense fog. Water vapors left from summer drift into its valleys before condensing into thick clouds hovering around the mountain. The humid air makes visiting as much of a spa experience as an outdoor adventure, and adds a mysterious atmosphere to the already majestic scene.

In midwestern China, forming the border between Sichuan and Shaanxi Provinces, Baishan Mountain is home to karst landforms, gorgeous peaks, and gurgling streams — both above ground and below. My group of *China Pictorial* journalists started from Yichang City in Hubei Province and took National Highway 209 for several hundred kilometers before reaching the Shanghai-Chengdu Highway. The long relaxing drive through the cool autumn breeze ultimately led to two of the most amazing scenic spots in the mountain: Shennongjia and Tenglong Cave.

A misty village near Shennongjia.



A Spa Tour of Shennongjia

A couple hundred kilometers from Yichang, the road became more and more winding. As it continued paralleling the Xiangxi River, the water gradually gathered more and more thick fog hovering above it. Our guide claimed that even he — a lifelong local — had never seen the fog so dense. Three big red Chinese characters on a huge rock on the side of the road announced our arrival in Shennongjia, and the thought running through my head was that we had finally reached the reputed hometown of the so-called "wild man" (an ape-like Bigfoot).

Shennongjia is the only well-preserved oasis in China's central inland areas, and the only oasis in the world's subtropical belt. Within heavy mountain forests of fir, pine, and hemlock lives a treasure trove of rare and endangered animals such as snub-nosed monkeys, white bears, serows, white cranes, and white storks.

However, the area is named after a legendary emperor, Shennong, who is believed to be the founder of both agriculture and herbal medicine. According to the legend, he collected herbs and used them to treat patients in the area, hence its name. Regardless of how much historical evidence supports this tale, relics certainly point to the area being one of the cradles of civilization in the East, with traces of human activity dating back more than 200,000 years.

As part of a more contemporary legend, Shennongjia has been rumored to be home to a famous wild, ape-like creature — similar to the Himalayan Yeti or the North American Bigfoot. Since the 1950s, dozens of visitors have claimed to have sighted the creature. In May 1976, the Chinese Academy of Sciences dispatched an investigative team deep into the forests of Shennongjia, in an effort to document the creature's existence. They came back with some startlingly tangible evidence including hair, footprints, and droppings. Even in recent years, more tourists and scientists have reported seeing the creature. Yet still to this day, not a single such living animal has been captured, leaving the whole issue in a cloud of mystery.

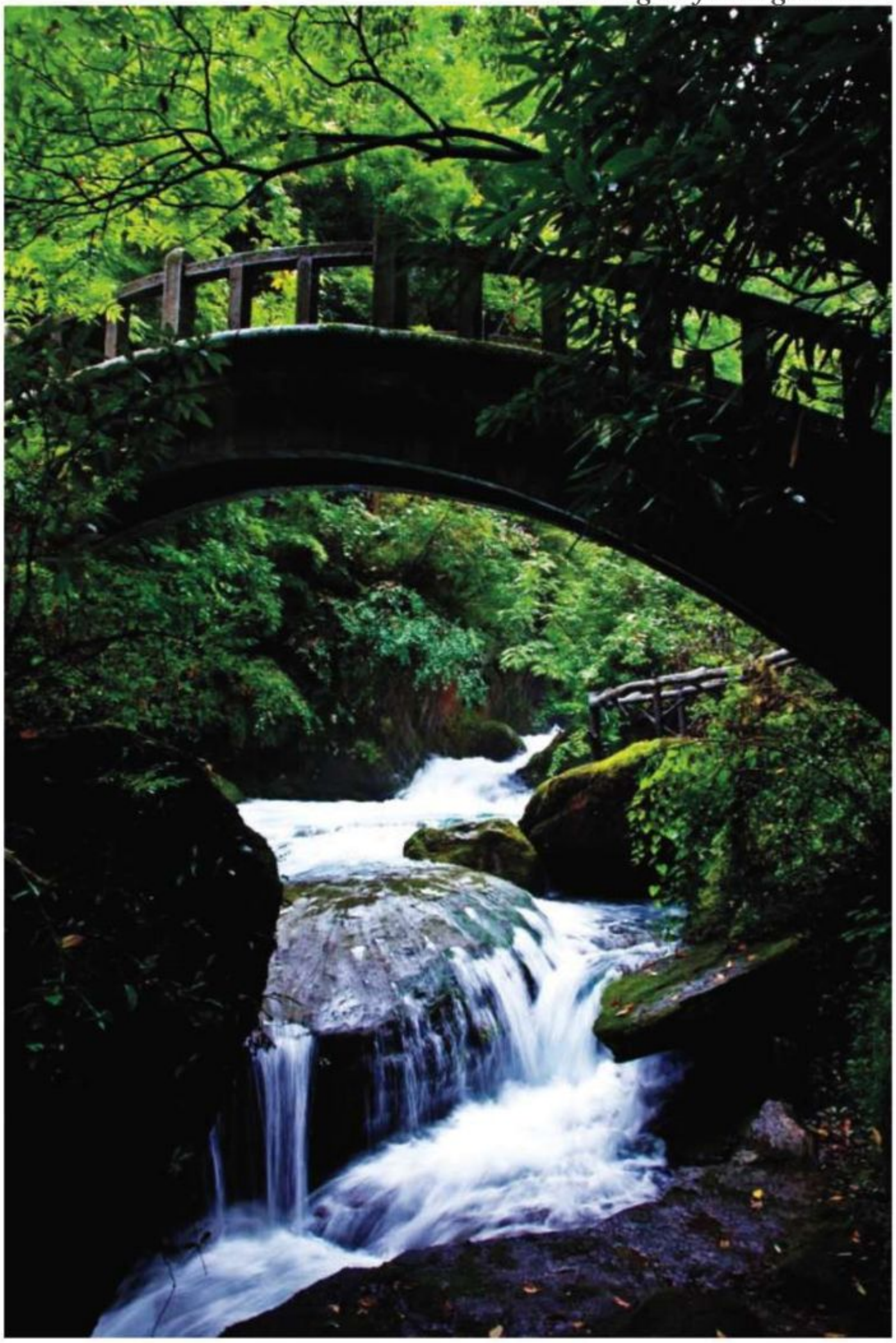
While driving along the winding mountain road, we enjoyed the fresh air that seemed to be infused with plentiful oxygen. Of course, on the slippery, air-moistened highway, we weren't lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the legendary creature, but I imagined they were spying on us, safely hidden in the dense woods. Before long, we arrived at the highest point of the mountain: Shennong Peak. The fog became even heavier at the higher altitude, and when disembarking from the bus, we could hardly see a thing, leaving us to only imagine what incredible scenery lied below. Legend has it that the stream where Shennong Emperor once washed his herbs and medicinal plants is the origin of Xiangxi River. We did find a stream high in the mountains, and it was the most magnificent and roaring creek I've ever seen.

Not far away was the Shennongjia Wildlife Protection Base, where we had the chance to visit a snub-nosed monkey family. Although they were temporarily staying in large cages, the monkey family normally enjoyed a nice environment there. The babies slipped through cracks in the cages to frolic in the trees. In the dense forest surrounding the base live all of their monkey relatives.

With our fog accompaniment the whole way, combined with frequent stops to take in the beautiful clouds,

Shennongjia is well known for its rocky peaks in various shapes.

The origin of Xiangxi River.

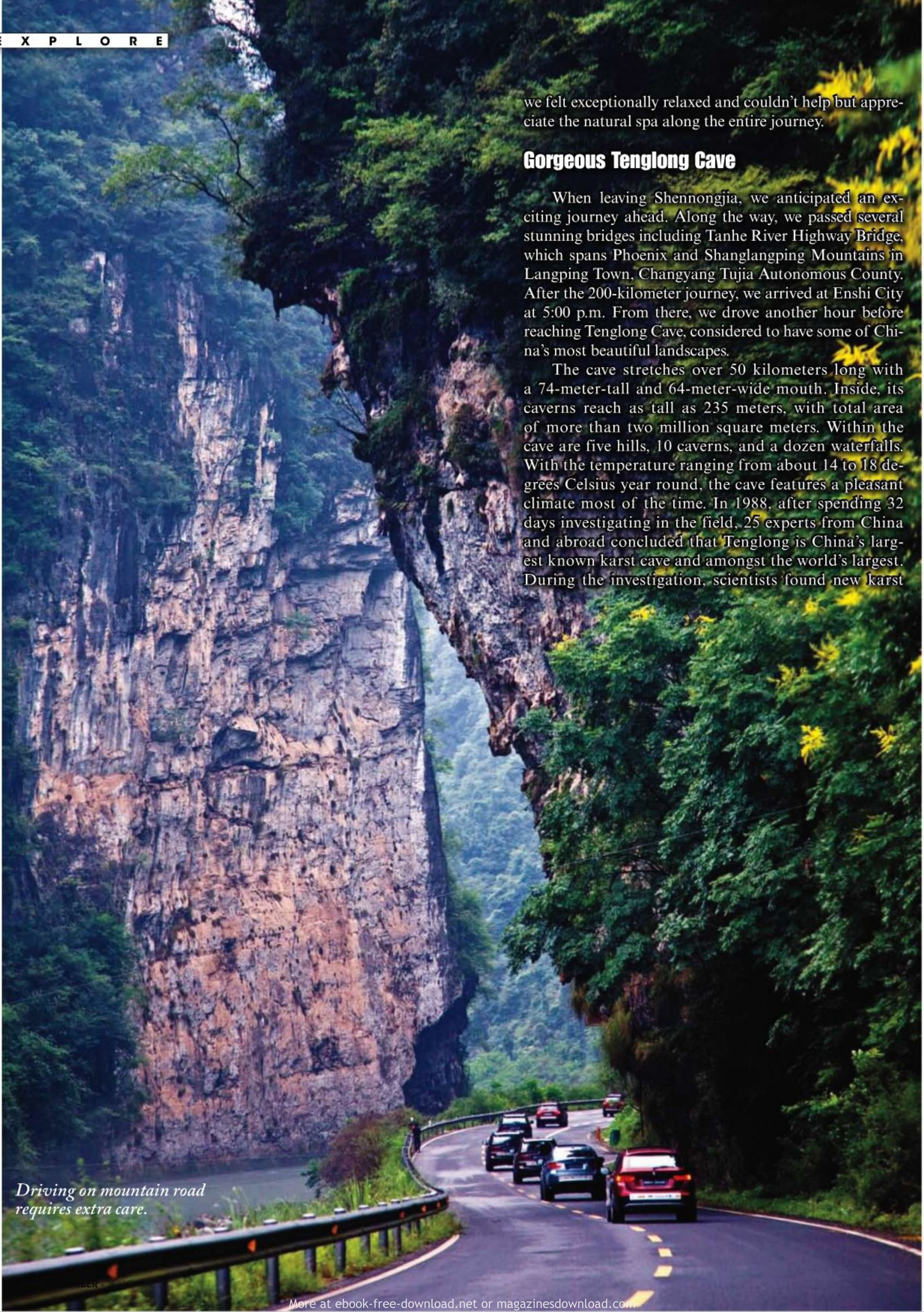


we felt exceptionally relaxed and couldn't help but appreciate the natural spa along the entire journey.

Gorgeous Tenglong Cave

When leaving Shennongjia, we anticipated an exciting journey ahead. Along the way, we passed several stunning bridges including Tanhe River Highway Bridge, which spans Phoenix and Shanglangping Mountains in Langping Town, Changyang Tujia Autonomous County. After the 200-kilometer journey, we arrived at Enshi City at 5:00 p.m. From there, we drove another hour before reaching Tenglong Cave, considered to have some of China's most beautiful landscapes.

The cave stretches over 50 kilometers long with a 74-meter-tall and 64-meter-wide mouth. Inside, its caverns reach as tall as 235 meters, with total area of more than two million square meters. Within the cave are five hills, 10 caverns, and a dozen waterfalls. With the temperature ranging from about 14 to 18 degrees Celsius year round, the cave features a pleasant climate most of the time. In 1988, after spending 32 days investigating in the field, 25 experts from China and abroad concluded that Tenglong is China's largest known karst cave and amongst the world's largest. During the investigation, scientists found new karst

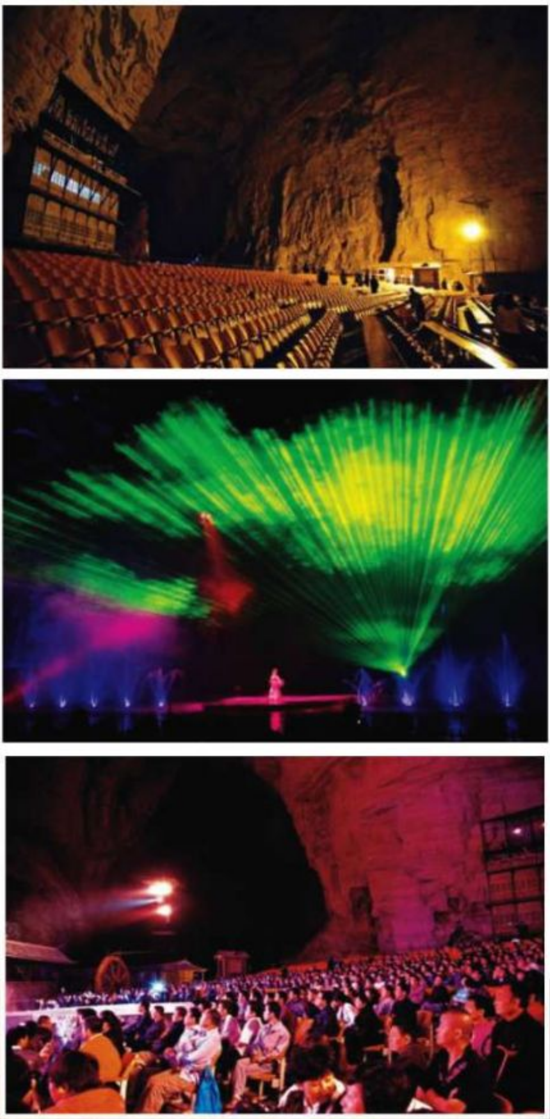


Driving on mountain road requires extra care.

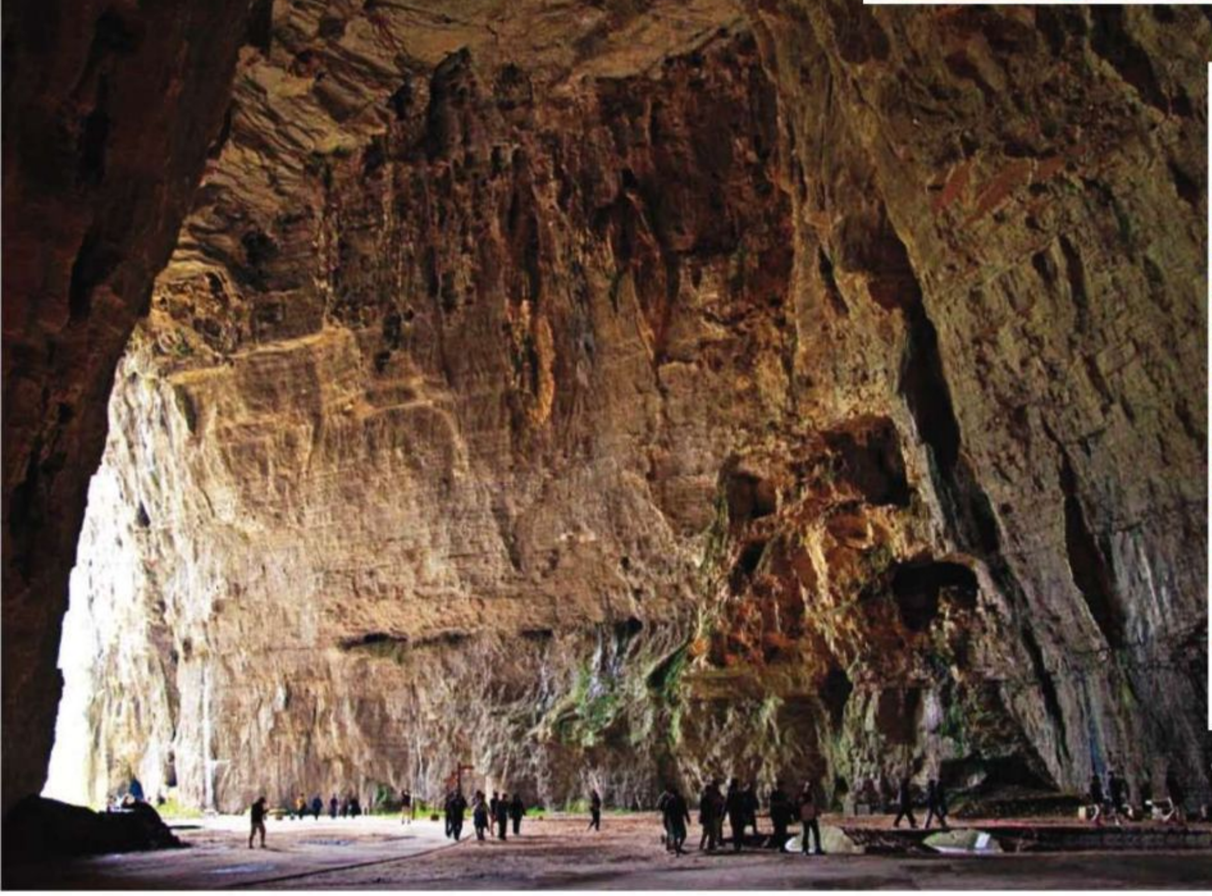
cave groups nearby including Tianchuang Cave, Liujia Cave, Shujing Cave, and Longgu Cave, which leads to an underground river — all noted as breathtaking scenic spots worth exploring.

Before my visit, I was already familiar with the saying that one should "visit Qomolangma [Everest] if you are a mountain climber, and visit Tenglong if you are an explorer." Still, when I arrived at its entrance, I was stunned. The massive mouth is shaped like a sword, smooth and angular. Two helicopters even once flew into the cave side by side. Upon entering, I was treated to even more breathtaking visuals. The interior seems endless. The deeper you go, the more spacious it becomes. I have been told that mountains with caves are actually hollow, and when walking inside this kind of mountain, I felt oddly claustrophobic. If you look up towards the ceiling, you may feel as if it could collapse at any time.

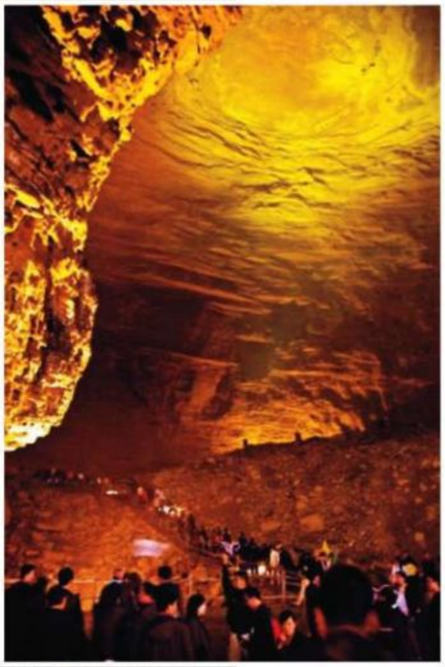
However, Tenglong Cave is not simply a hollow mountain. In the center of the cave is a huge theater, where a laser water show is presented daily, attracting large audiences. Although the temperature in the cave can drop, most visitors are more than happy to endure chills to witness the seldom-seen performance. After the show ends and everyone walks out of the cave, the audience members are imbued with new warmth and light, as if returning to earth after visiting another world.



The huge theater within Tenglong Cave.

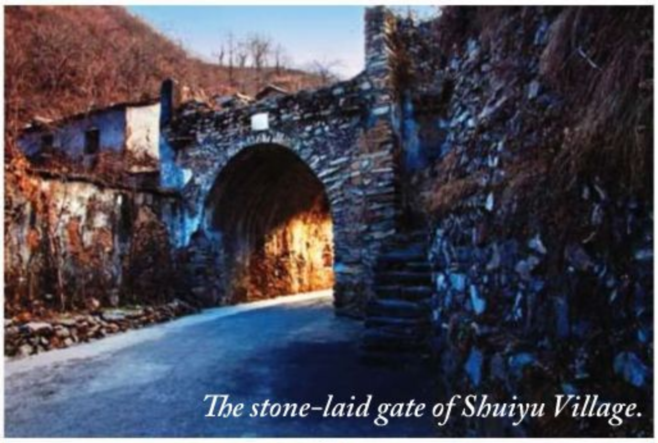


Spacious Tenglong Cave.

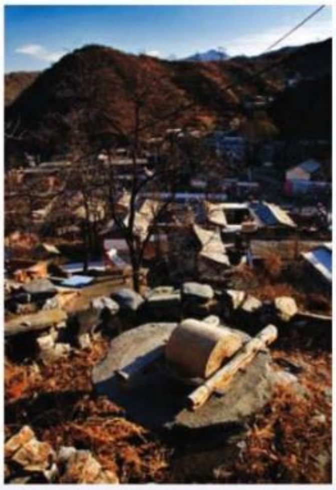


Flagpoles and Millstones

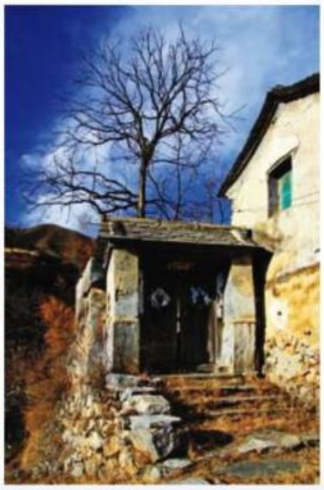
Text and photographs by Wang Ying



The stone-laid gate of Shuiyu Village.



Old millstones are scattered throughout the village.



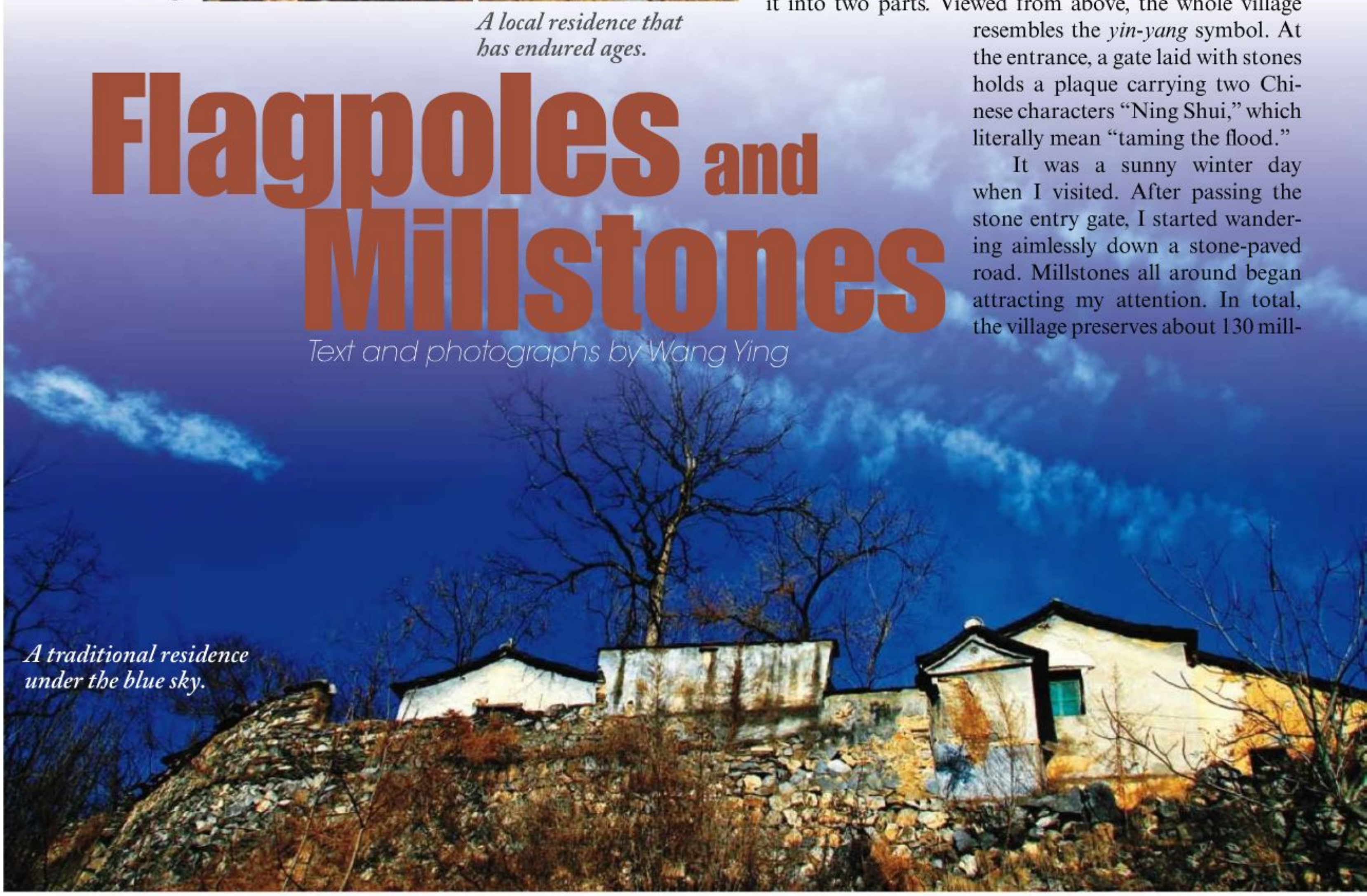
A local residence that has endured ages.

With the frantic pace of urbanization in China's capital city, traditional *siheyuan* (residential quadrangles) and *hutong*s (narrow lanes) are becoming harder and harder to find in central Beijing. Many lovers of ancient architecture are now turning their eyes towards the suburbs, where some surrounding villages still preserve residences in the architectural style of the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Shuiyu Village in suburban Beijing Municipality's Fangshan District is one particularly good example worth visiting.

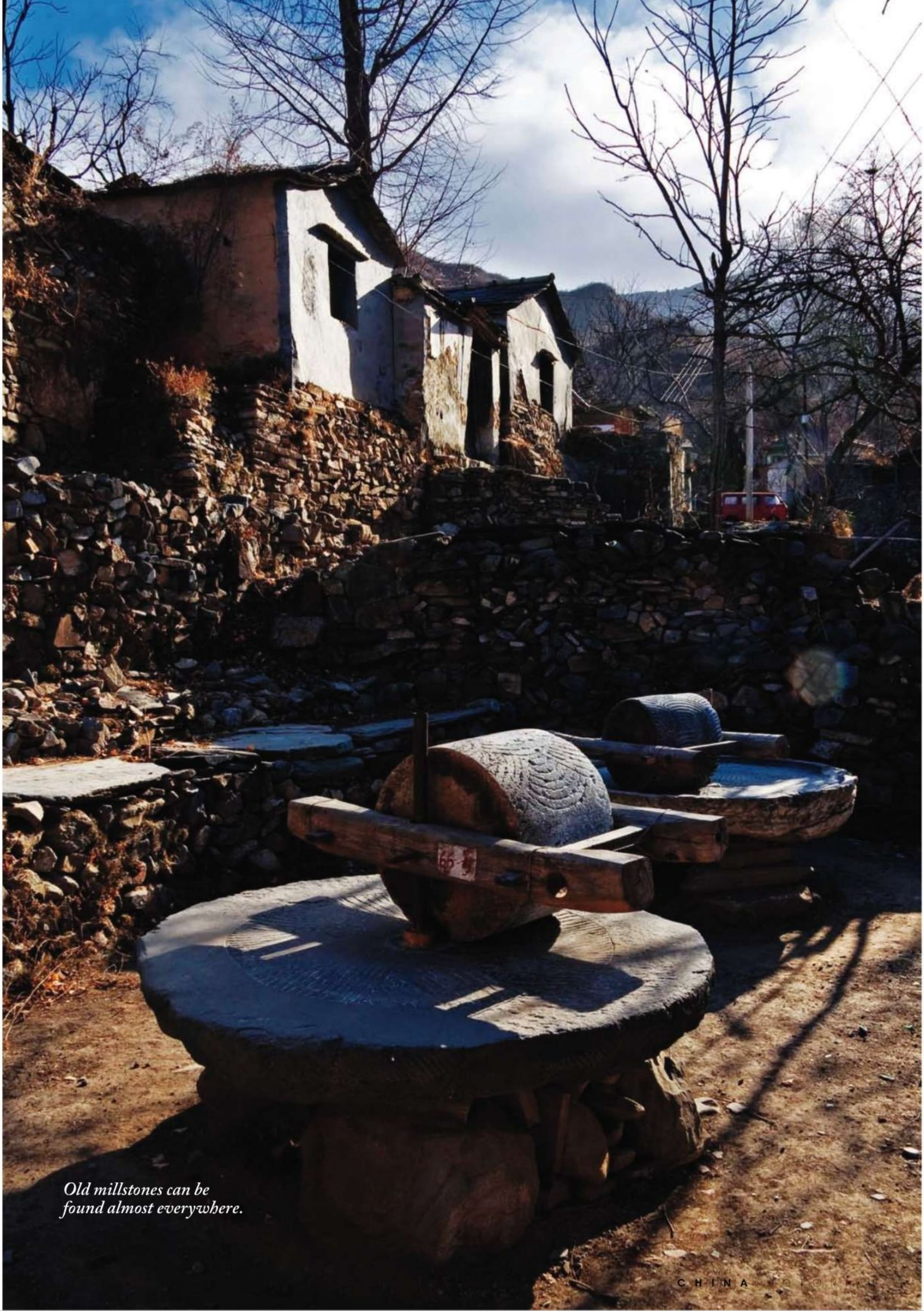
In 2004, a field survey of historical relics across Beijing caused the once-secluded mountain village to reveal itself to the outside world. Historically, merchants from Shanxi Province stopped there to rest during business trips to the capital. Today, the village features more than 100 preserved quadrangle residences from the Ming and Qing dynasties, which total more than 600 rooms. The ancient structures are distributed in an orderly fashion across the mountainside. Along with its classical homes, the village is also noted for old millstones and traditional flagpole performances, both examples of folk heritage that has been passed down over generations. In 2004, it was dubbed a municipal-level folk tourist village of Beijing. This year, it was nominated as one of Beijing's Most Beautiful Villages.

The village is laid out in a circular shape. A snaking, stone-paved road zigzags through the center, dividing it into two parts. Viewed from above, the whole village resembles the *yin-yang* symbol. At the entrance, a gate laid with stones holds a plaque carrying two Chinese characters "Ning Shui," which literally mean "taming the flood."

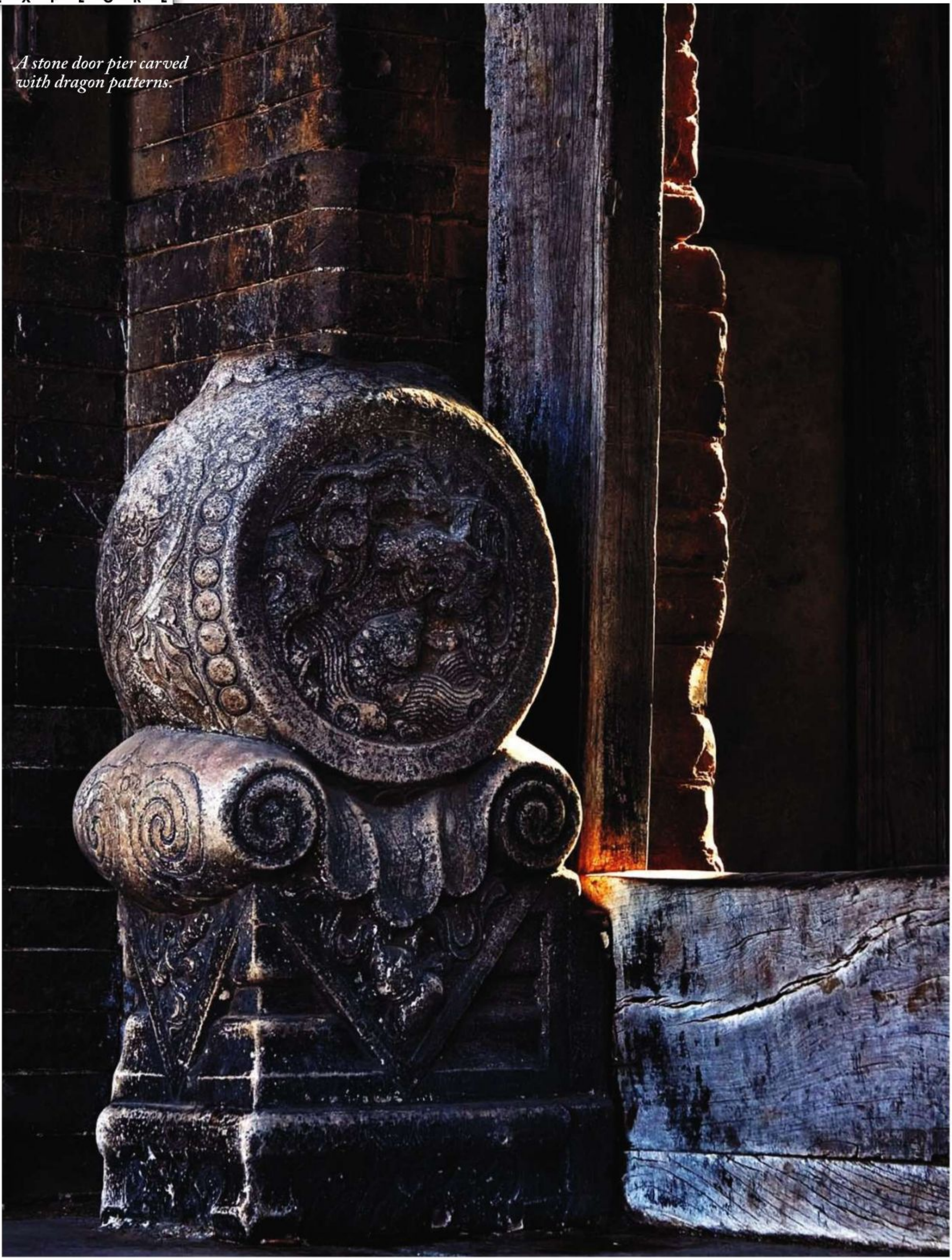
It was a sunny winter day when I visited. After passing the stone entry gate, I started wandering aimlessly down a stone-paved road. Millstones all around began attracting my attention. In total, the village preserves about 130 mill-



A traditional residence under the blue sky.



Old millstones can be found almost everywhere.



A stone door pier carved with dragon patterns.

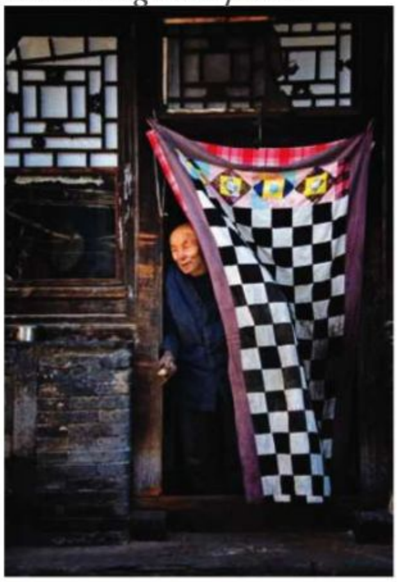
stones, most of which come from the late Qing Dynasty. The oldest can be traced back to the reign of Emperor Daoguang (1821-1850), yet still finds use with locals. Despite centuries of weathering, the notches etched on the millstones still remain visible, reminding everyone of the village's past. I imagined grinding newly harvested corn on the century-old millstones and then eating a hot bowl of porridge made from the powder.

From atop the east hill, I could look over the entire village. Under the deep blue sky, stone-laid residences emitted a pristine and lasting historic charm resting in the warm embrace of the surrounding mountains, while the serene vista was accented by ancient millstones and trees dotting the village's landscape.

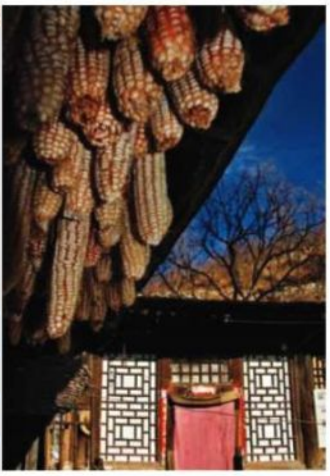
The village's most magnificent building is Yang's Compound, also called Xuefangyuan. Built during the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty, it includes four courtyards and 36 rooms laid with stones. Its front gate is decorated with exquisite brick lotus, peony, and chrysanthemum carvings, and the gate's stone girder is carved with a pattern resembling winding branches. The upper door frame is also exquisitely decorated with two characters surrounded by carved lotus pedals, which respectively mean "happiness" and "wealth." To my surprise, some door piers were decorated with dragon patterns. Such designs are rare in Beijing because only wealthy families or aristocrats were allowed to decorate their home pillars with dragons.

Locals claim that the compound originally belonged to a wealthy merchant who hired 30 artisans to spend three years building the house. Now, it is home to several villagers who are all more than 70 years old. When I entered, an elderly man was carrying an iron water barrel, and I was instantly impressed by the simple, pristine life the residents lead. They still sleep on earthen beds and keep warm with a coal-fueled stove. The joints of the stove chimney were patched with clay to prevent smoke leakage. The man's wife was too old to hear clearly and couldn't walk without assistance. However, when I turned my camera towards her, she combed her hair and offered an amiable smile. Despite their relatively simple, archaic lifestyle, I could tell that the old residents felt a certain comfort and peaceful spirituality looking after the ancient house. They often tell visitors legendary stories about the compound. Mr. Yang pointed towards the ancient buildings and millstones within the compound and asserted, "They're precious treasures handed down from our ancestors."

Several elderly residents now live in Yang's Compound.



Shuiyu Village abounds in crops such as millet.



Corn cobs hang under the eaves of a local residence.

Although hidden deep in the mountains, the village is filled with a cultural ambience. On the wall of a local family's foyer, I was astonished to see calligraphy copying famous artist Wang Xizhi's *The Prelude of Orchid Pavilion*. As I explored deeper into the village, the priceless relics became so frequent that I felt no surprise happening upon a pair of couplets with rich literary value on the front door of an otherwise unremarkable home.

In fact, over the centuries, Shuiyu Village developed and preserved brilliant folk culture and art, including flagpole performances, *dagu* (storytelling accompanied by drums), and *yangge* (rural folk dance). The local flagpole performance remains famous, although it originated in the early Ming Dynasty and reached its zenith in the mid-19th century. On important occasions such as temple fairs and traditional festivals, a flagpole performance will be organized to pray for blessings. In 2007, the local flagpole performance was added to the list of Beijing's Intangible Cultural Heritage. Today, the village is home to a troupe consisting of 30 elderly flagpole performers. In 2008, the troupe achieved overnight worldwide fame after their fantastic performance at the warm-up folk show preceding the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics. After that historic moment, the group has received frequent invitations to perform all over China.

Travel Tips

How to Get There:

Located in Nanjiao Township, Fangshan District, Shuiyu Village is 80 kilometers away from downtown Beijing. Tourists should take Bus 917 to Fangshan Bus Station, then take Bus F23 to the village.

Where to Stay:

There are about 10 folk hostels offering room and board. A standard room costs 60 yuan per night.

What to See:

A village with Ming and Qing flavors, Shuiyu features ancient buildings, old millstones, and traditional flagpole performances. For ages, local villagers have made livings through ecological agriculture and fruit growing. Along with corn and wild vegetables, the village is also famous for dates, pears, and walnuts. Presently, it has become a holiday destination that integrates sightseeing, recreation, agricultural experience, and folk performances.

The Most Beautiful Countryside

Text and photographs by Lin Dihuan

Southern Jiangxi Province's Wuyuan County, widely reputed as "the most beautiful countryside in China," has used its notoriety to evolve into a favorite tourist destination. Many of the county's once-serene villages, especially those in the east, have transformed into bustling tourist destinations with visitors from all over the world. However, Likeng Village in the northern tip remains the same as it was centuries ago, thanks in part to its natural protection from mountains.

When I traveled to Huizhou, a historic destination in Anhui Province, I stopped for several days in Wuyuan, which was near the halfway point of my journey. I ended up spending most of the time in Likeng, where I discovered a relaxing environment rarely matched elsewhere.

After breakfast, I lounged on a roadside stone bench reading a book titled *The Ming History* as the morning haze from the surrounding hills blanketed the village. White walls and black tiles of local residences were complemented by a placid brook meandering through the village to compose a traditional ink and wash painting before my eyes. I became immersed in the beautiful scenery while reading my book about centuries past and lost track of time as the hours flew by.

At dusk, smoke began curling up from kitchen chimneys as farmers returned home from their day in the fields. Shadows of the pointed gables of local houses stretched longer and longer as the sun fell towards the horizon. Next to the village's Tianxin Bridge, several men chatted over cigarettes as women below the bridge washed clothes, vegetables, and rice in the glistening water.

Likeng Village's history can be traced back to the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). From its earliest days, local residents paid great attention to both agricultural development and education of their children, and this tradition has survived the centuries. Historical records note that the village was home to 16 *jinshi* (those who passed the highest imperial examinations), 36 high-ranking officials, and 92 eminent scholars. Of the 582 known books written by locals, 78 were included in the *Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature*, a Chinese encyclopedia compiled during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

A small brook meanders through the village.

The remarkable literary achievements of the village are forever etched in history. However, the white walls and black tiles of local homes are coupled with stunning countryside scenery featuring clean streams and exquisite stone bridges to provide iconic symbols of home for those who reside there. A simple stroll through green crop fields dotted with ponds can lead to unparalleled relaxation, a fact that more and more urban-based tourists are discovering.

Although certainly weathered after centuries of service, most of the village's traditional buildings retain their original magnificence, hinting at the town's glorious past.

The village's most famous architecture lives on in the former mansion of Yu Maoheng, a personnel minister of the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The building features classical doorways and carved girders. Traditionally, locals liked to place a clock, a bronze mirror, and several vases in the main hall of their house to represent a prayer for "lifelong peace," and the owner of this mansion was no exception.

After reading Yu Maoheng's story in *The Ming History*, I learned that during an investigative tour of Shaanxi Province, Yu discovered that Liang Yong, a local tax official, was extorting money from ordinary people by posing as an imperial envoy. After Yu reported Liang's crimes to the courts, Liang actually bribed Yu's cook to poison his dinner. Yu managed to survive the attempted murder, and presented his evidence and witnesses to the emperor. Liang was punished by demotion to employment in horse husbandry. After his retirement, Yu returned to his hometown to serve the village's youth as a teacher.

Although based on recorded facts, perhaps that historical anecdote is not fantastic enough to help villagers and tourists get excited about Yu. The story that makes Yu's name remain a household one is more legendary. When he retired, the emperor rewarded Yu's service with several red carp to praise his integrity and justness. It is said that this gift allowed the red carp to begin populating local streams, and now the fish wrapped in lotus leaves remains a popular dish to serve to visitors to Wuyuan.

When I set off on a spring afternoon, a puppy followed me outside the village, seemingly seeing me off. I looked back to the village once more, taking in the backdrop of distant hills and the pristine brook zigzagging through the town. Several old men were smoking pipes against the familiar black and white residences, while women continued diligently washing clothes in the stream. Children were chasing each other across a stone bridge, and I silently bid farewell to the singular village.

Travel Tips

How to Get There:

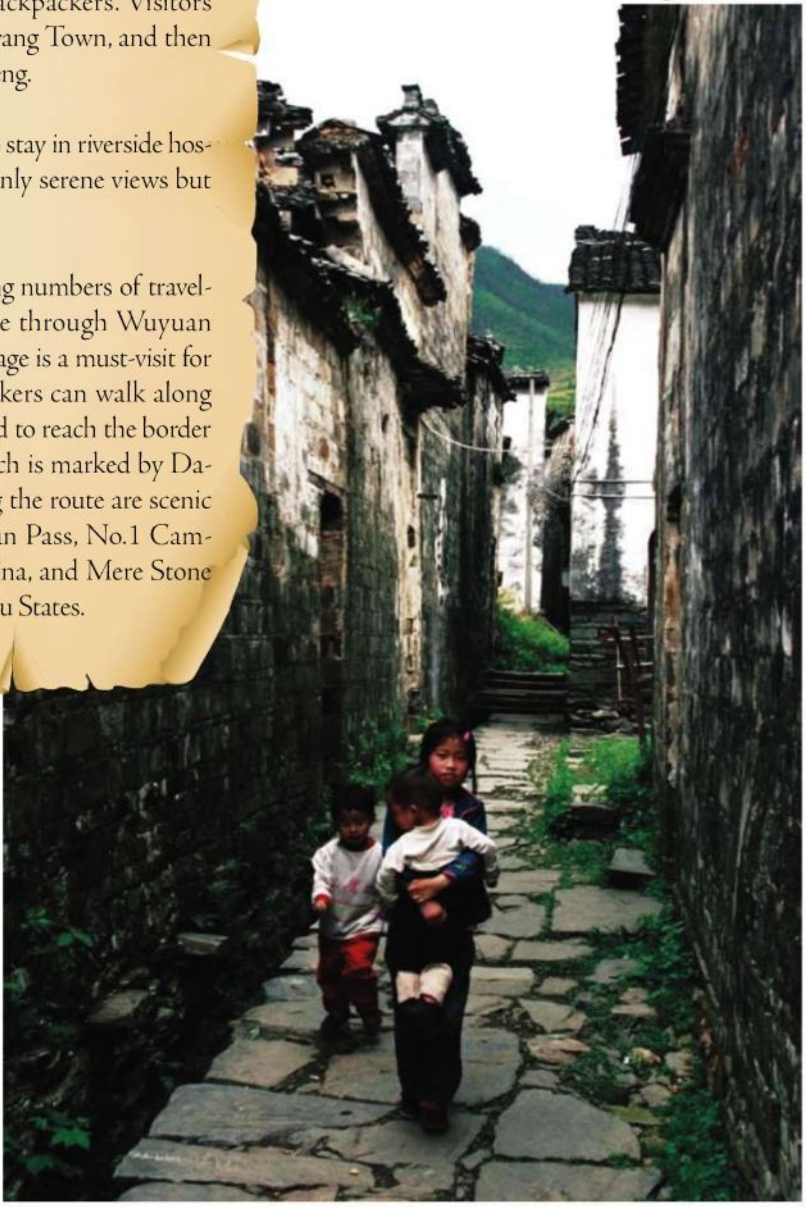
Located in Tuochuan Township, in northeast Wuyuan County, Likeng Village is still a relatively unknown travel destination. However, this makes it an ideal destination for self-driving travelers and backpackers. Visitors should first travel to Ziyang Town, and then hike or take a bus to Likeng.

Where to Stay:

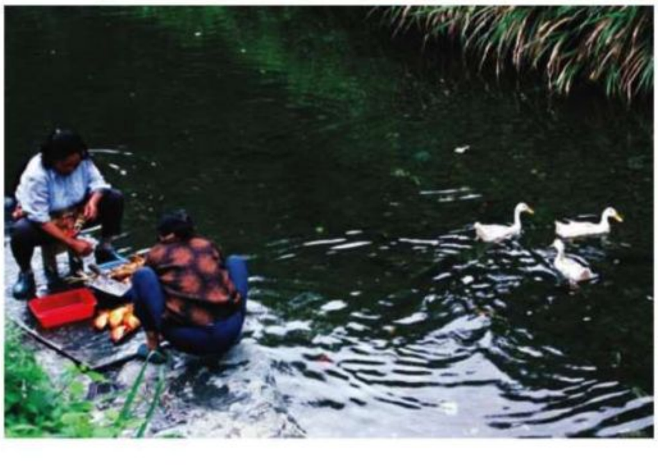
Tourists are suggested to stay in riverside hostels, which feature not only serene views but also cozy bars.

What to See:

In recent years, increasing numbers of travelers are choosing to hike through Wuyuan County, and Likeng Village is a must-visit for hikers. From Likeng, hikers can walk along the ancient Huiyao Road to reach the border of Anhui Province, which is marked by Dazhang Mountain. Along the route are scenic spots such as Hongguan Pass, No.1 Camphor Tree in South China, and Mere Stone between the Wu and Chu States.



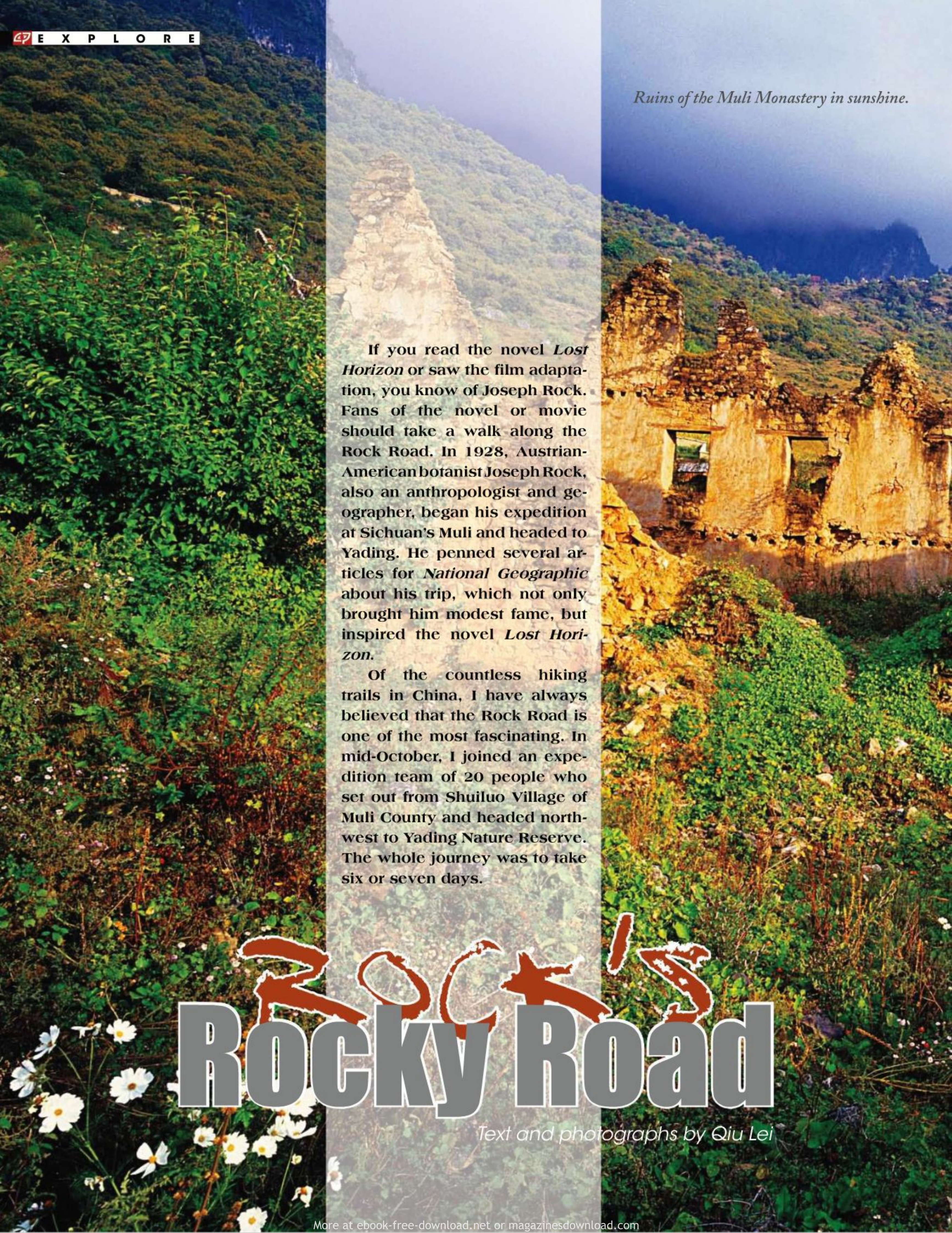
Local children walk down a stone-paved lane.



Local women wash fish for dinner in a small stream.

Rock's Rocky Road

Text and photographs by Qiu Lei



Ruins of the Muli Monastery in sunshine.

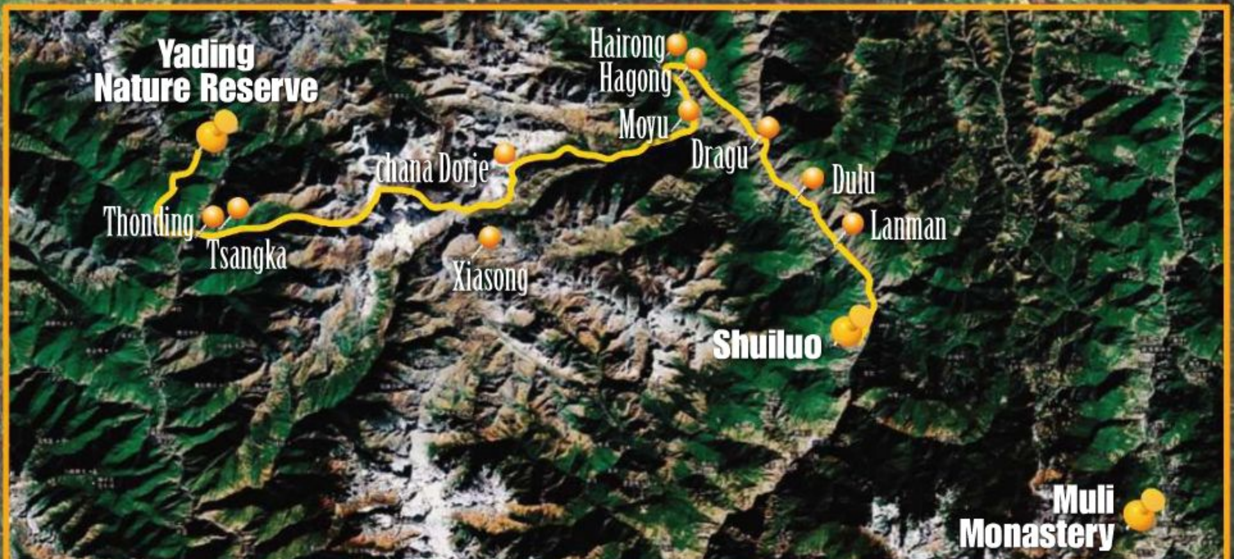
If you read the novel *Lost Horizon* or saw the film adaptation, you know of Joseph Rock. Fans of the novel or movie should take a walk along the Rock Road. In 1928, Austrian-American botanist Joseph Rock, also an anthropologist and geographer, began his expedition at Sichuan's Muli and headed to Yading. He penned several articles for *National Geographic* about his trip, which not only brought him modest fame, but inspired the novel *Lost Horizon.*

Of the countless hiking trails in China, I have always believed that the Rock Road is one of the most fascinating. In mid-October, I joined an expedition team of 20 people who set out from Shuiluo Village of Muli County and headed northwest to Yading Nature Reserve. The whole journey was to take six or seven days.

Muli Monastery and Grooms

Six friends and I spent our first night on four single beds pushed together. Then, after a five-hour drive, we arrived at Muli Monastery, which was described in detail by Rock. The building's lamas apparently didn't see outsiders very often and welcomed us with open arms. They even prepared a small welcome ceremony. The idea of the religious ceremony excited our group, which was mostly composed of photography fans. The structure appeared quite new and similar to other Tibetan monasteries I've visited. However, when I came across its outer walls, I found the remains of collapsed buildings – the Muli Monastery of Rock's time.

Yellow daisies were blooming on a remaining windowsill of the ruins. I left the bustling welcome ceremony to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Nature Reserve
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Dulu
Thonding
Tsangka
Lanman
Xiasong
Shuiluo
Muli
Monastery

document the once magnificent building with my camera.

From the monastery, we took a coach 80 kilometers to get to Shuiluo Village. Along the way, we passed altitudes of more than 3,800 meters. After arriving in Shuiluo, we rented some horses to carry our luggage up the steep slopes. We were surprised to find that most of the horses were not equipped with saddles, so we bundled quilts on their back to lessen the strain of our bags.

Tendrup, a handsome young Tibetan, headed our caravan. Dressed in a leather jacket, he looked like a cowboy straight out of an American Western movie. I once spent years working and living with camel workers in Xinjiang, so I guessed our caravan leader would be as authoritative as camel caravan captains. I soon found the error in my assumption. Since our horses came from different owners, the respective grooms each tried to load lighter luggage on their own horse. I suggested to Tendrup that we divide the horses into four groups and give each one a team leader. He happily agreed to my idea. At first, the grooms obediently followed the orders, but soon they began wandering separately through the dense forests. Because of their arbitrary movements, we weren't able to eat with the rest of the group and arrived at camp at different times. However, we remained grateful that no one was lost.

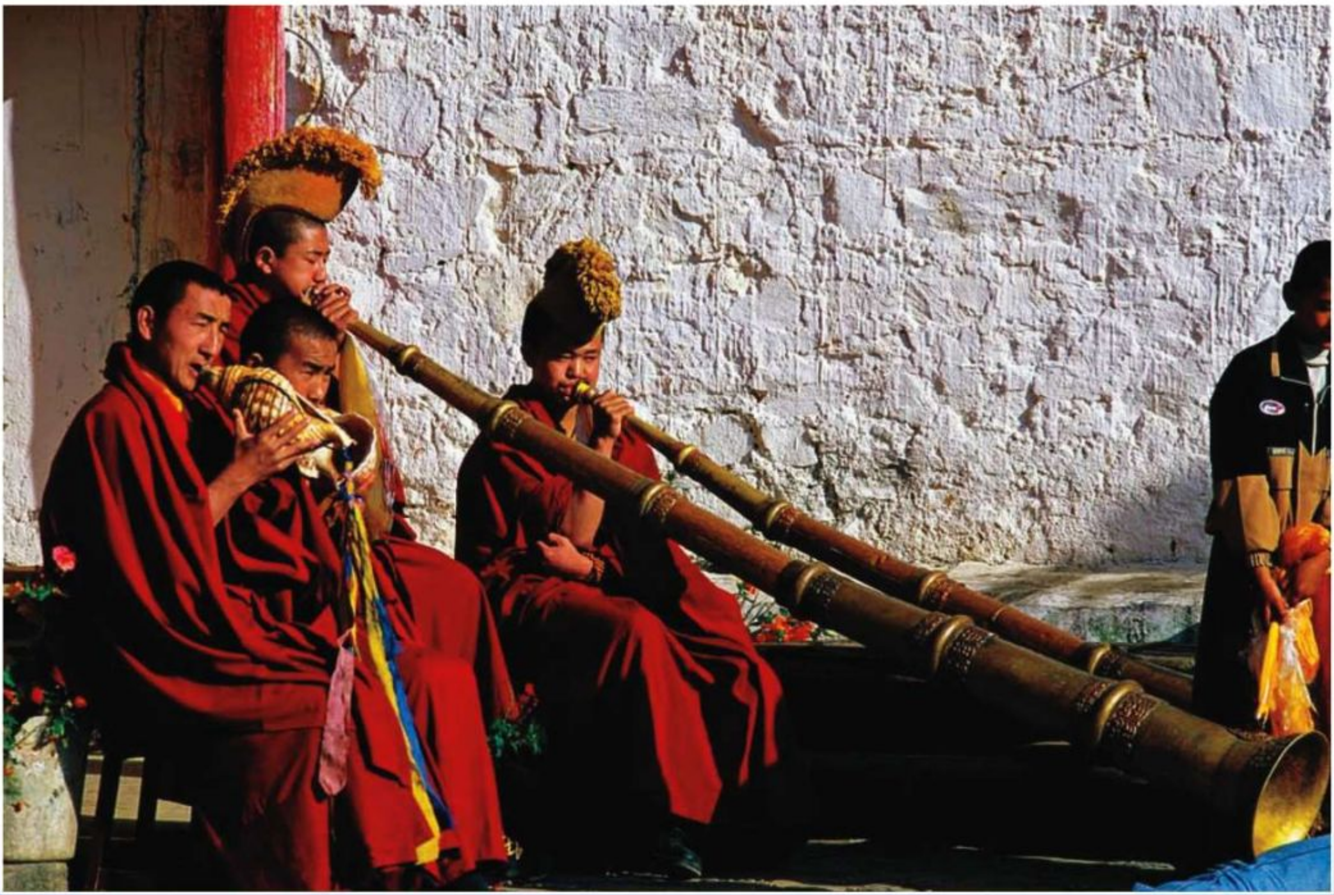
Along the way.

God's Garden

Exciting scenery appeared the next day.

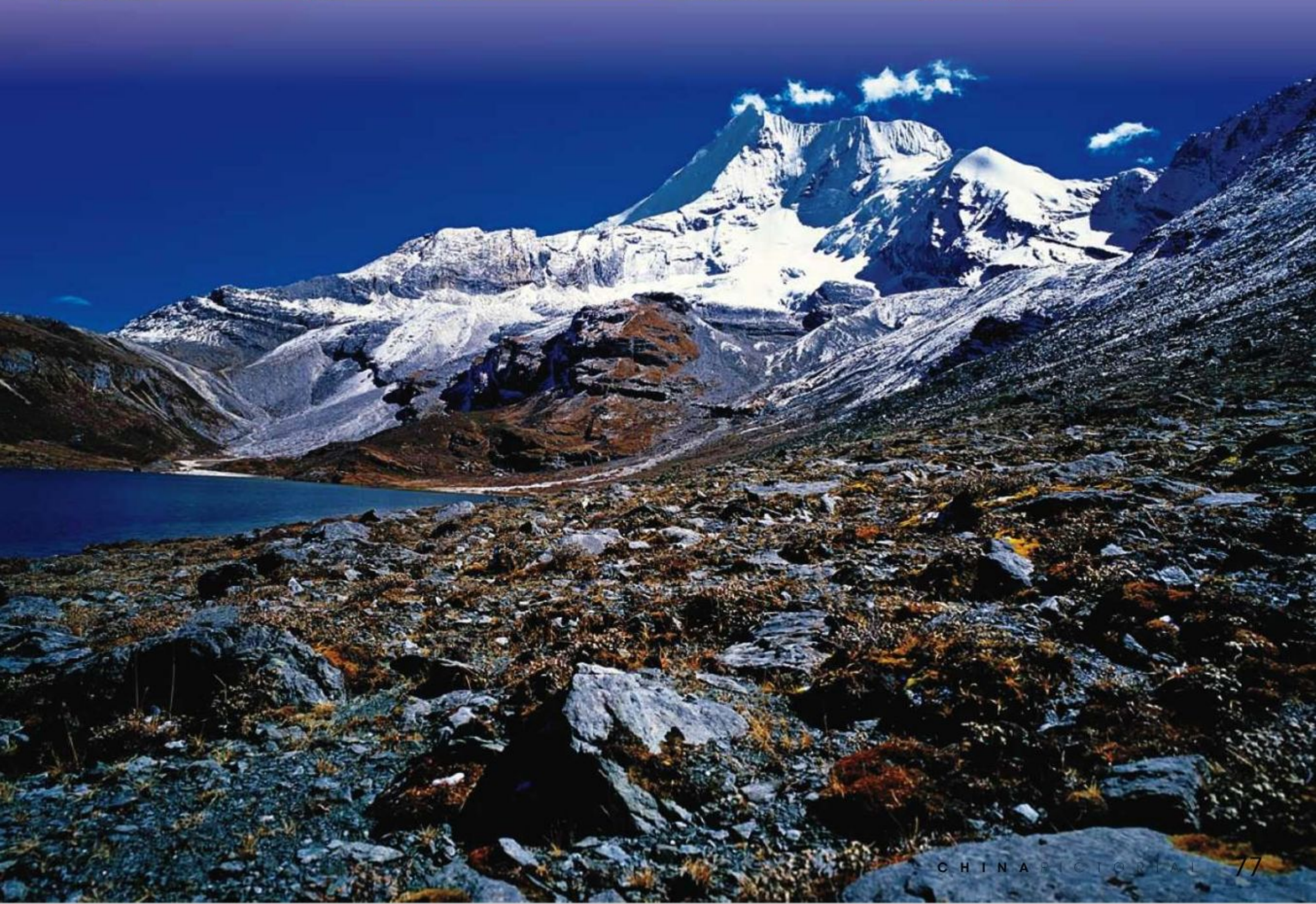
We passed through a valley and began climbing, surrounded by golden autumn scenery. A gorgeous waterfall fed several streams trickling down from an oval-shaped mountain before emptying into a pond. Against the backdrop of golden forests, the scenery looked like something out of a fairy tale. We even marked the waterfall on our

A lama from the Muli Monastery.



Religious ceremony at Muli Monastery.

The 6,027-meter-tall sacred Jambeyang Mountain.



God's garden.

GPS so that we could make sure to find it again on our way back.

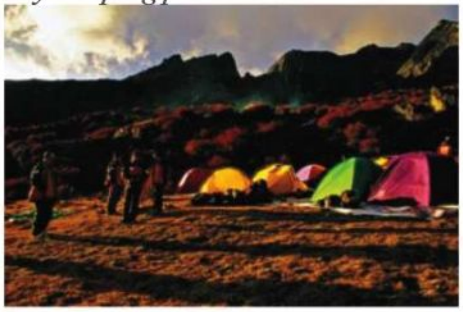
After camping in the chilly valley, we were greeted by the warm sun the next day. Heading southwest, we soon arrived at an expansive meadow where we met Chana Dorje Snow Mountain, the first sacred hill of our trip.

Under the deep blue sky, the white of the snowy mountain sparkled pristinely, dotted with dark red bushes. The combination of colors made me think of the French flag. According to Rock's descriptions, I guessed that this was the location he dubbed "God's garden." Most of the foliage there stood at similar heights, making the plants seem to have been artificially trimmed. After we chose the ethereal garden as our camping site, we almost forgot that we were in the middle of an expedition. Camping at such a marvelous place could have been a holiday on its own. I noticed several stone houses off in the distance, and our guide explained that they were herdsmen's homes, but since the cold had arrived, the herders had already taken their cattle to lower altitudes.

Bathed in the plateau's sunshine, we spent our "mini-vacation" taking photos, drinking tea, and playing cards. Lost in relaxation, we completely forgot how different conditions can get when the weather changes to not quite as pleasant.

Climbing Ridges

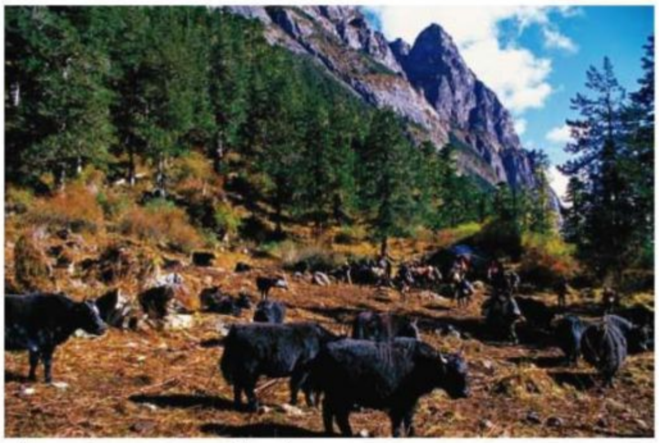
My camping place.



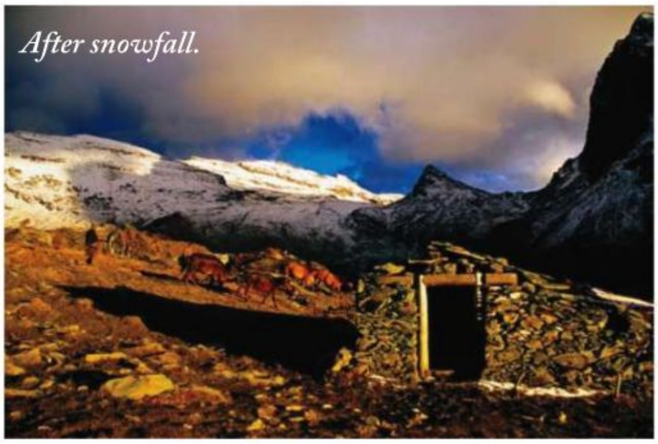
On October 15, we prepared to scale a 4,600-meter-high ridge. Accompanied by our loyal steeds, we set out for the daunting mountain. Before we knew it, not only we, but our horses as well, were all out of breath.

Finally, after four hours of climbing, we reached the first ridge. But soon after we descended down the first, a second appeared – then a third and a fourth. By the third, black clouds had gathered overhead and hail began pelting us immediately. We had no choice but to set up camp at once.

The biggest challenge arrived the following morning. After waking up, we found a vast expanse of whiteness all around us. The whole valley was covered with heavy snow, and over 20 centimeters of it was on my tent. We were not encouraged. The trek immediately ahead included an extremely steep slope. How could we possibly proceed in these conditions? If anyone in our group fell, the result could have been disastrous. However, if we waited too long, the conditions could have worsened. The grooms asserted that snow in the mountains often stayed longer than a week and that we could get stuck for a long time. We gathered for an emergency meeting, and the difficult



A grazing spot on the plateau.



After snowfall.

Sacred Chenresig Mountain.

decision was finally made. We planned to have the horses lead the way to blaze a trail and follow behind them.

At an altitude of 4,200 meters, we headed towards another ridge, which stood at an altitude of 4,700 meters. We continually hoped that after each ridge, we would find an easy downhill path. However, every time we conquered one level, a higher one awaited.

At 6:00 p.m., we reached the seventh and last ridge. After trudging through snow for nine hours, we arrived at our next camping spot just before sunset. The setting sun was particularly beautiful against the white of the snow. Of my team members, several had never hiked such wild terrain before, so they were especially excited and proud of our success.

October 18 marked the final day of our trek. When we finally arrived at our destination, we looked back at Chana Dorje Snow Mountain again glistening under the sun. At that point, we cared less about the articles Rock had written for *National Geographic*, because absorbing his words was nothing compared to experiencing the journey first-hand.

This mountain valley leads to Yunnan.

Yading Nature Reserve.

"UN WFP Fund Raising Gala Dinner" was Held in Swissotel Beijing

"United Nation World Food Programme Fund Raising Gala Dinner", organized by the Embassy of Peru, Swissôtel Beijing, Swissôtel Lima in collaboration with the UN WFP and CFPA China, was held in the Grand Ballroom in Swissôtel Beijing, on 29 October, 2010. More than 200 People attended it from different Embassies, UN WFP to Chinese enterprise companies.

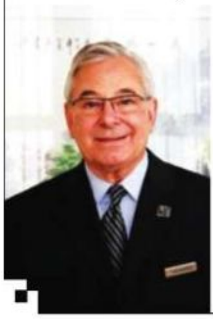
During the evening, Josette Sheeran, UN WFP Executive Director; Harold Forsyth, Peru Ambassador to China, and Jack Breisacher, General Manager of Swissôtel Beijing hand over the donation to Lin Liyun, the Honorary President of the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. The donation, amounting to RMB102,000, will be used to provide nutritious meals for poor students in China's rural areas.

New General Manager at Swissotel Beijing

Swissôtel Beijing Hong Kong Macau Center is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Jack Breisacher in the position of General Manager.

Mr. Breisacher is an American national hotelier with more than 37 years of international and deluxe hospitality experience; international hotel brands he has worked with include: Marriott International, Stouffer Hotels & Resorts (Nestlé), Renaissance Hotels International, Hilton Hotels & Resorts and Loews Hotels & Resorts. Mr. Breisacher has been with Swissôtel Hotels & Resorts since 2003.

Mr. Jack Breisacher worked as Hotel Manager in Swissôtel Chicago prior to his appointment as General Manager of Swissôtel Beijing.



Centro's Seventh Anniversary Celebrations Went High

On Friday, 5 November 2010, Centro brought its week-long anniversary celebrations to a summit high, highlighting free-flowing champagne by Moët et Chandon, stunning costumes and party music by Big City Beat from Australia, and a sportswear fashion show by Porsche. The event created a Centro-style night of glamour, which hit another entertainment record for the nightlife of metropolitan Beijing.

Centro, featuring real cocktails, fine wines, sultry music and a seductive ambience, is regarded as an exciting fusion of five-star service, comfortable but cutting-edge interior design and live entertainment of international standards. It is a place to see and a place to be seen.

Festive Celebrations at Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing

Evoke the spirit of Christmas and end 2010 with a resounding bang! Be it a gift of a festive hamper, a scrumptious Christmas Eve buffet dinner or a New Year's Eve countdown party, Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing has a line-up of culinary treats perfect for a grand finale to the end of the year.
Please call (86 10)6561 8833 for more details or reservations.

The Magic Christmas Eve

(December 24, 2010)

When the feather-flown snow falls down just on the midnight strike, the rhythm of the anthem and slivery ring waving around you,
Santa Claus comes on a sleigh,
Beautiful pixies dancing in the brilliant ray of light,
Christmas is approaching…
RMB1388, 1188, 988 net per person for adults;
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* Enjoy the authentic western Christmas gala buffet
* Test surprise of the exciting luck draw prize in a totally festive and magic ambience…to feel the brilliance and passion comes from the collision by Christmas and magic.
* Wonderful live performance
Order before Dec.10, 2010, enjoy 30% discount.
Venue: Garden Court Bar, 1st floor Holiday Inn Downtown Beijing, 98 Beilishilu, Xichengqu, Beijing 100037,
For reservation, please call: (86 10)68338822 ext.7146

Celebrate a Memorable Christmas at InterContinental Beijing Financial Street

Again, this year, the InterContinental Beijing Financial Street brings you another memorable Christmas with unparalleled high quality seafood from Alaska, USA, bubbling Champagne, sensational entertainment and amazing lucky draw prizes. Each of our Restaurants is themed differently to provide more choices to your families, friends and beloved ones. No one should miss out this festival season!
For more information, please call (86.10) 5852 5916 or 5852 5975.

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Tel: (86 10) 5852 5888 Fax: (86 10) 5852 5999
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Merry Christmas

Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingles All The Way…
Another fantastic year has passed and once again is time to celebrate!
At the Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, we have prepared a wide variety of international cuisine and gastronomic treats, not forgetting spectacular performance to accompany you all night long.
Celebrate this festive season with family, friends and loved ones for an exciting night filled with joy and laughter.

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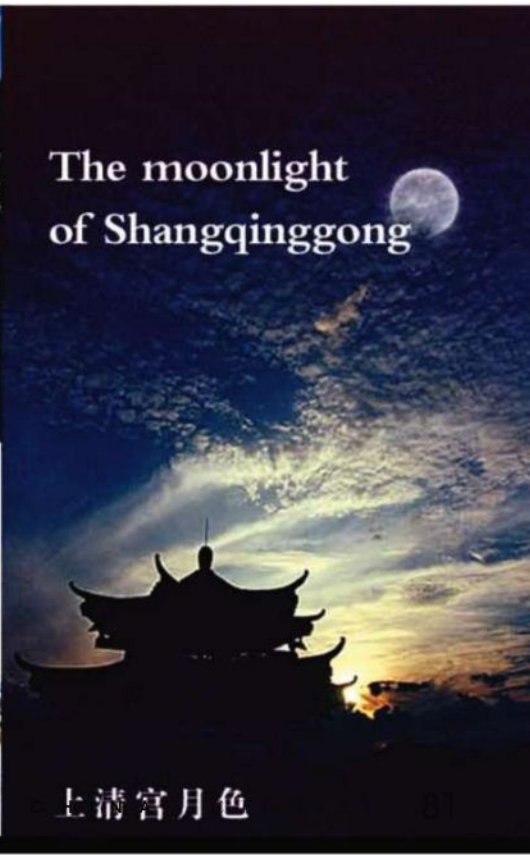

The moonlight of Shangqinggong
上清宫月色

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